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MAY 2000 · NO. 21

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**JUNE 2000**

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# The Fate of the Universe Lies in the Hands

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— pc.ign.com

# MDK2™



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Kurt Hectic, once a mild-mannered janitor, now savior of the universe is back in MDK2.

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**REQUIRES**  
3D Acceleration



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# of a Janitor, a Genius and a 6-Legged Dog.

- Play as 3 heroes, each offering a different gameplay experience:

**Max** — Run-and-gun into battle with four arms of fire power.

**Dr. Hawkins** — Solve puzzles to create deadly weaponry.

**Kurt** — Sneak, snipe and shoot in a new suit equipped with a cloaking device.

- Save the world with unorthodox munitions like the Black Hole Grenade and the Atomic Toaster.
- Humorous storyline unfolds with each level all the way to the spectacular grand finale.
- Developed by Bioware Corp., creators of the award-winning game *Baldur's Gate*.



# CONTENTS

MAY 00

16

## THE FUTURE OF TEAMPLAY

Kicking the living shit out of your friends online is fun, but ganging up to disembowel complete strangers is so much better. We'll show you why team play games like *Tribes 2*, *Team Fortress 2*, *Halo*, and *SWAT 3* are the future of online ass-kickings — oh, and we've got some pictures of the luscious Donna D'errico in latex, if you like that kinda stuff

FEATURES



34

## THE ASS OLYMPICS

You might think you know what ass is, but we're here to show you how wrong you are. We took a crapload of all the worst games and put them head to head in competition. Find out who the losers and, err ... bigger losers are in this no-star craptacular spectacle of assness!



DEPARTMENTS

### TECHPHILES 44



A boy and his Athlon, reviews of Saitek's blasphemous substitute for keyboard gaming, another special appearance by Limey, and the Microsoft Internet Keyboard Pro

### PLAY BY PLAY 85



What happens when WWF goes NFL? Find out what we think the XFL should be. Plus, the newest racing games. How fast can you grab your stick shift?

### STRATEGY 90



We know you like to slaughter people online, and we tell you how. Our advice on *Nox* is more helpful than penicillin in Bangkok

### ONLINE ARENA 92



It's *The Sims* vs. "Friends." Which is better, lesbian love interests or big hooters? Also, the return of the online nuisance — you too can piss people off in only a few easy steps!

### X-TRA 94



Satan on games, a touching farewell to Rob Smith (without actually touching him — we charge extra for that), plus lots of other shit that you can't live without. No, really.



#### ON THE COVER

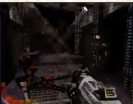
Donna D'Errico is married to Nikki Sixx. Nikki is in a band called Motley Crüe. Crüe is doing the soundtrack for a game called Tribes 2. Tribes 2 is one of the games that will revolutionize multiplayer gaming. Got it? Oh yeah, and Donna's totally hot! Photos by Ed Fox, hair and make-up by Miranda, body by God, latex provided by Siren

## PREVIEWS



### 49 PROJECT IGI

More real than *Half-Life*, less real than *Rainbow Six* — but will it be fun?



### 55 ST: VOYAGER

A chance to stomp some Borg ass in the delta quadrant with the QW engine



### 60 DARK REIGN 2

Finally, just what we've been waiting for! A game with a "bloodbath" mode



### 64 MOTOCROSS MADNESS 2

More insane crashes, better graphics, and a bunch of stunning new tricks

## MONEY SHOTS



### 66 MONEY SHOTS

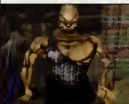
Okay, so we didn't give you "real" money shots last month. This is the geek equivalent that you'll get off to anyway

## REVIEWS



### 70 X: BEYOND THE FRONTIER

Get rich, kill aliens, and blow shit up. What else is there?



### 71 DEMISE

Just like a cheap prostitute, this game might be ugly, but gets the job done



### 72 INVICTUS

Greek heroes stomp around and torture less-civilized races



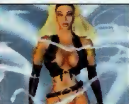
### 73 MAJESTY

A kingdom slim from Hasbro. Does it suck?



### 74 HIDDEN AND DANGEROUS: DEVIL'S BRIDGE

How could you possibly get tired of killing nazis?



### 75 WET ATTACK

Is there such a thing as bad porn? Chuck and his little friend say yes



### 76 1602 A.D.

This game needs to have its interface slapped

### Shock Your Girlfriend!



page 103

Exclusive Cosmo Parody Spectacular

## COLUMNS

### EDITOR'S LETTER 10

Yet again, Mike is spouting off about something or the other. We don't pay him any mind, so why should you?

### FIRST PERSON 112

"Bring on the clones!" cries the crackified Matt Holmes. Meanwhile, Mike Salmon provides the kinder and gentler voice of a sane person.

## PC Accelerator



### WE COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT THEIR HELP...

(Actually we could, but they threatened to make us watch "Baywatch Nights" if we didn't say that) Britney Spears, Laetitia Caesta, Pamela Anderson, Sharon Stone, big-breasted women the world over, Donna D'Errico, Sandra Bullock, Tanya Harding, Lorena Bobbitt, Miss Piggy, Mimi from "The Drew Carey Show," Linda Tripp, Bill Clinton, David Letterman, Gary Coleman, George W. Bush, Regis Philbin, Kathy Lee Gifford, Brian Boitano, Jennifer Love Hewitt, Garth Brooks, Mary Hart, Puff Daddy, Mister Socko, The Rock, Bill Gates, Satan, Ted Kennedy, Jesse Helms, Strom Thurmond, David Spade, Marilyn Monroe, Ru Paul, and Rebecca Romijn-Stamos

## THE DISC

### 12

Tired of downloading demos on a crappy 56K modem? No problem. Just get 'em off this month's disc. Matt and Kyle got a bunch of stuff for you to look at, so enjoy it or they'll cry like little girls.



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AND BELOW  
AND ALL SIDES

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PREQUEL TO E3'S BEST OF SHOW, FREELANCER.

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# Starlancer

FROM ERIN AND CHRIS ROBERTS, CREATORS OF THE WING COMMANDER AND PRIVATEER SERIES

YOUR SQUADRON'S BEEN GIVEN NO TRAINING OR RESPECT. YOU'VE GOT NOTHING TO LOSE. AND THAT'S WHAT MAKES YOU DANGEROUS. AS A MEMBER OF THE 45TH VOLUNTEER SQUADRON, A RAGTAG AVIATION UNIT, YOU'RE FIGHTING THE COALITION FOR CONTROL OF OUR SOLAR SYSTEM. COMBINING INTENSE FIRST-PERSON SPACE COMBAT, THE DRAMA OF A GREAT WAR FILM, AND STUNNING 3-D GRAPHICS, STARLANCER DELIVERS AN INCREDIBLE ADVENTURE REQUIRING SKILL AND DAMN-THE-TORPEDDES CONFIDENCE IN THE FACE OF NEAR-INSURMOUNTABLE ODDS. THE FIGHT FOR FREEDOM HAS NEVER BEEN THIS FIERCE. OR THIS REAL. JOIN THE FIGHT AT [WWW.MICROSOFT.COM/GAMES/STARLANCER](http://WWW.MICROSOFT.COM/GAMES/STARLANCER)

Go to <http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411>. Product Number 62

Digital Anvil



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The 3dfx logo is located in the bottom right corner of the advertisement. It features the letters '3dfx' in a stylized, bold font. The '3' is white, while 'dfx' is orange. A small orange flame-like graphic is positioned above the 'x'. The logo is set against a dark, textured background that appears to be a wall or a large object in a dimly lit room.

SO POWERFUL IT'S KIND OF RIDICULOUS.

Go to <http://pcx1.ign.com/gaming411>; Product Number 10

## LAST MAN STANDING

It all started about two years ago in the deep, dark recesses of Imagine Media. Ed Lee, Dan Egger, Carrie Shepherd, Q! Dorozquez, Kyle LeBoeuf, Rob Smith, and yours truly gathered around our completely unfurnished offices and started a quest to be the best PC gaming magazine in the world. We laughed, we cried, we drank, and then we drank a whole lot more. Eventually the fruits of our labor turned into what you are holding in your hand right now — *PC Accelerator*, the finest gaming magazine in the world (according to an independent study conducted by our friends and families).

Since then, the magazine has undergone massive changes each month and staffers have departed almost as frequently as the drummer for Spinal Tap. I'm saddened to say that we have sent Rob Smith off to pasture and punished Kyle LeBoeuf with a tenure at IT, leaving me as the last of the Original Seven. Personally, I miss each and every one of my old friends. Their quirks, their Quarks, their typos, their "habits," and even their funny accents. We had some great times and we made some magic, but that is the past. The future of *PCXL* and the future of PC games begins here and in issue 21. I have built a new staff, made them stronger, bigger, better, and faster. These aren't just men, they are marauding half-man, half-editorial-robotic beasts with only one thing on their mind — to make *PCXL* better with each and every issue.

### THE TEAM

#### EDITOR IN CHIEF



**MIKE SALMON** → [mike@pcxl.com](mailto:mike@pcxl.com)  
**WHO HE REPLACED** → Old Mike  
**WHY OLD MIKE LEFT** → He got married  
**WHY "NEW MIKE" IS BETTER THAN "OLD MIKE"** → Now that New Mike is married he doesn't have to worry about impressing his girlfriend, so he's much more likely to write her into print  
**NOW PLAYING** → *Quake III*, *Somno Soso's High Heel Baseball 2000*, *Soldier Of Fortune*, *Unreal Tournament*, *Quark Editor*

#### MIKE SALMON, Editor in Chief

### SPOTTHEFAEK!D

Find the ad in *PCXL* that seems less than right and email it to [info@pcxl.com](mailto:info@pcxl.com) to qualify for "Tabooing" prizes.

**APRIL FAKE AD** → *Extreme Dwarf*  
**MOCKING** → "Extreme" games, cheap licensing, good taste  
**MAY FAKE AD** → *Homeyworld*  
**MOCKING** → Pimp's, h's, and scidies with vapor trails  
**"Fubulous" prize this month** → *PCXL* issue #18, photographed by the original staff — an incredible value!

#### EXECUTIVE EDITOR



**JASON SAMUEL** → [jason@pcxl.com](mailto:jason@pcxl.com)  
**WHO HE REPLACED** → Rob Smith  
**WHY ROB LEFT** → He was getting "too old for this job"  
**WHY JASON IS BETTER THAN ROB** → He's an American and early reports are that he is 49% jamaican than Rob ever was — isn't that enough?  
**NOW PLAYING** → *Soldier Of Fortune*, *Age Of Empires II*, *Unreal Tournament*, *Horus The Freelancers*

#### EDITORIAL TEAM



**STEVEN HEAD** → [steven@pcxl.com](mailto:steven@pcxl.com)  
**WHO HE REPLACED** → Bill Donahue  
**WHY BILL LEFT** → After exactly one and a half years on the job, Bill had simply had enough  
**WHY STEVEN IS BETTER THAN BILL** → Even though he is still temporary, he has already put in more hours and copy than Bill — plus he isn't armed  
**NOW PLAYING** → *Cadavronne Egic*, *Unreal Tournament*, *Horus of Might & Magic 3*

#### MANAGING EDITOR



**PHILIP MAYNARD** → [phil@pcxl.com](mailto:phil@pcxl.com)  
**WHO HE REPLACED** → Carrie Shepherd  
**WHY CARRIE LEFT** → She went on to become a Superhero of Grammar. Either that or she shacked up with some scuffly actor type and is awaiting her first child  
**WHY PHILIP IS BETTER THAN CARRIE** → He's really certain that Philip won't ever have to go on pregnancy leave  
**NOW PLAYING** → With thoughts of how he can take a pregnancy leave

#### ASSOCIATE EDITOR



**CHUCK OSBORN** → [chuck@pcxl.com](mailto:chuck@pcxl.com)  
**WHO HE REPLACED** → Dan Egger  
**WHY DAN LEFT** → He was returned back to the wild where he could roam free with the other Eggers  
**WHY CHUCK IS BETTER THAN DAN** → He's actually just a full-sized version of Dan, who can hold down his liquor  
**NOW PLAYING** → *Quake III*, *Soldier Of Fortune*, *System Shock 2*, *Pinocscope Torment*, *Unreal Tournament*

#### ASSOCIATE EDITOR



**MATT HOLMES** → [matt@pcxl.com](mailto:matt@pcxl.com)  
**WHO HE REPLACED** → Ed Lee  
**WHY ED LEFT** → He didn't really leave, he just showed up REALV late  
**WHY MATT IS BETTER THAN ED** → He never let his photoshop his head on a woman's body — Matt's head is already on a woman's body  
**NOW PLAYING** → *Soldier Of Fortune*, *Wax*, *Worlds of Warcraft*, *Pinocscope Torment*, *Hidden and Dangerous*

#### INTERV./MODEL/FASHION COORDINATOR



**GIA DECARLO** → [gia@pcxl.com](mailto:gia@pcxl.com)  
**WHO SHE REPLACED** → Hector Salazar  
**WHY HECTOR LEFT** → Hung himself from the rafters when he just couldn't handle life in the fast lane. In the end the good life was just a little too good to our dearly departed associate editor  
**WHY GIA IS BETTER THAN HECTOR** → We can think of at least two very big reasons  
**NOW PLAYING** → *The Sims*, *Hearts*, *Dormel II* at *Dress*

#### ASSOCIATOR



**KYLE LEOEUF** → [kyle@pcxl.com](mailto:kyle@pcxl.com)  
**WHO HE REPLACED** → Q! Dorozquez  
**WHY Q! LEFT** → Was tragically caught behind enemy lines  
**WHY KYLE WAS BETTER THAN Q!** → He never said the phrase, "pink canoe" and rarely sent us questionable photos of old men finding each other  
**NOW PLAYING** → *Soldier Of Fortune*, *Unreal Tournament*, *Age Of Empires II*, *HomeWorld*, *Anti-viral*, *Trapped Pro*

#### ART DIRECTOR



**ERIC SMITH** → [eric@pcxl.com](mailto:eric@pcxl.com)  
**WHO HE REPLACED** → Kyle LeBoeuf  
**WHY KYLE LEFT** → He wants a more relaxed lifestyle in the Imagine Media IT department — good luck, now where the hell are our new processors?  
**WHY ERIC IS BETTER THAN KYLE** → He has access to more pictures of naked women than Hugh Hefner  
**NOW PLAYING** → *Soldier Of Fortune*, *Unreal Tournament*, *Age Of Empires II*

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lame duck art director  
 art fud  
 our little art helper  
 our little art helper's helper

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#### GAZETTE

Who's In? A gaming magazine dedicated to the "future" genre. The reviewers will be mostly, somewhat current on their Who's On? The Editor, Mike Salomon, and the Staff. It will include the best new software and special Review and Tech Support columns.

Who's Out? Contains two extremely popular magazines, Computer and Binary, into one gaming powerhouse.

Why do we? In the magazine in a form of a bunch of glib who's in just who's in. This may seem absurd.

Not to fear, of the Original Seven, Mike was the only one with a lick of talent anyway (So he thinks).

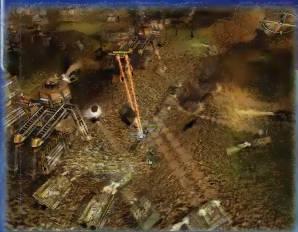
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# WE ARE "FAMILY"

## STEINBECK'S GAMES OF WRATH

**T**he post-Christmas rush, having long since ended, brought the dreaded first quarter season, and the warm, loving flow of games slowed to an irregular dripping, much like the notorious Chinese Water Torture. It's in these hard times that the demo crop runs dry and the shrill wailing of hunger from the DDR (Demo-Decision Room) becomes truly unbearable. Matt left in search of the only thing that would cease the noise and return joy and love to the PCXL office — hot, sweaty demos. When he returned, his gooey marsupial pouch was filled with goodies-a-gogo. From the bullet-riddled land of Red Storm he found *Shadow Watch*, while the citadel of Talonsoft held *Operation Eagle*. Deep within the sprawl of Electronic Arts, *Superbike 2000* reared its head. With great aplomb, Matt heaved these and more into the DDR, and the office was happy once more.

### LEGEND

- DEMO
- PATCHES
- A/U
- MAPS
- TOOLS
- RATING

### DEMOS

- SOLDIER OF FORTUNE
- OPERATION EAGLE
- INVICTUS
- SHADOW WATCH
- SUPERBIKE 2000
- VIRTUAL POOL HALL
- NASCAR 2000
- SUPER DUELING MINI-VANS

### X-TRA

- UNREAL TOURNAMENT BONUS PACK
- ICEWIND DALE
- HALO
- AGE OF WONDERS 1.35 UPDATE
- BATTLEZONE II 1.1 UPDATE
- HALF-LIFE 1.0.1.6 UPDATE
- PHAROAH ENHANCEMENT PATCH
- QUAKE III ARENA 1.16M UPDATE
- REVENANT 1.2E UPDATE
- SOLDIER OF FORTUNE DEMO PATCH
- SWAT 3 1.2 UPDATE
- TIBERIAN SUN 2.02 UPDATE



VIRTUAL POOL HALL



SUPERBIKE 2000



SOLDIER OF FORTUNE



Wait! Is that a regular 36-wheeler, loaded with mutant KFC "chicken," or is it really Optimus Prime?

The PCXL disc interface transforms once every 20 days. It becomes bigger, better, and faster so that readers like you who actually read tiny text like this get your money's worth. Notice that we have given the menu system Star Trek-like simplicity.

REQUIREMENTS: WINDOWS 95/98, PENTIUM 133MHZ, 32MB RAM, DIRECTX 5.0, MOUSE, 100% SOUND BLASTER COMPATIBLE CARD

Disc problems? Visit our website at [www.pcxl.com](http://www.pcxl.com) and click on the customer service link, or call 800-333-3890.

### THE DISC MINI-FAQ

**Q:** How come you didn't put *Ultima: Ascension* on the disc again? *PC Gamer* gave it over 80%!

**A:** The one demo that did get released was huge. It was huge and buggy. Huge, buggy, and merely a horrible taste of what was to follow. Besides, we put it on our disc ages ago and nobody liked it, so there.

**Q:** Doesn't "money shot" mean something naughty?

**A:** Sometimes, when two people love each other very much, they get a film crew together and get wiggly with each other. When one of the men becomes very happy, he gives one of the women a gift — and when that moment is captured on glorious film, that gentle friends and neighbors, is called a "money shot."

**Q:** Why is "family" spelled "famblly" on the title up there?

**A:** Because all our readers are well-read, we know this question is just to get our goats, but we'll answer it anyway. In the John Steinbeck novel, *Grapes of Wrath*, characters refer to the family as "famblly" all the time. It must be a phonetic thing. Either that, or a really bad copy editor.

SCANTILY CLAD MODELS • ALIENS • GADGETS • GOOP

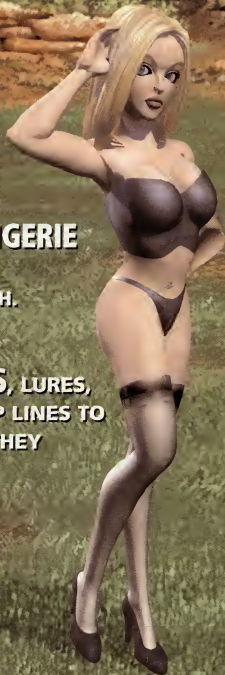
# PANTY RAIDER

From here to immaturity...

**THREE ALIENS  
HAVE LANDED.**

**THEY WANT  
PICTURES OF  
MODELS IN LINGERIE  
OR THEY WILL  
BLOW UP THE EARTH.**

**USE YOUR  
X-RAY GLASSES, LURES,  
GOOP AND PICKUP LINES TO  
GET THEM WHAT THEY  
WANT...OR ELSE.**



# "ACTION GAME OF THE YEAR"

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HAD US ADDICTED LIKE CRACKHEADS ON PAYDAY"

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- CNN

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THAT IGN HAS EVER GIVEN A GAME"

- IGN.COM

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# Tired of Playing with Yourself?

JOIN THE REVOLUTION,  
AND TEAM UP WITH THE FUTURE OF ONLINE GAMING

**H**ang thy heads low fellow believers ... the end is near! Beloved deathmatch is dying. Everything that could be done has been, and new maps, new weapons, and better graphics will only keep it alive for a few more precious months. Like the shark, which stopped evolving millions of years ago, the near perfection of deathmatch in *Quake III* and *Unreal Tournament* leaves little room for improvement. Our trembling monkey-like recon slaves have returned with grim news. It seems that the future of multiplayer first-person shooters is team-based games, a focus that involves more than mindlessly killing other humans — the future will entail working with your fellow man to mindlessly kill other less evolved humans.

In the past couple of years we've watched *Team Fortress Classic*, *Rainbow Six*, *Tribes*, and others lay claim to what was once deathmatch territory. But where deathmatch has basically no room to grow, team-centered modes of gameplay are well-armed for a revolution. Like the leap from *Doom* to *Quake*, there are games on the horizon that will forever change the way gamers battle. While nothing will ever replace deathmatch for a fun 15-minute bloodbath, teamplay games like *Tribes 2*, *Halo*, and *Team Fortress 2* are leaving the kid stuff behind and taking point in the new online wars.

These games will have both indoor and outdoor environments, recognize something beyond mere kills, serve the community even more, and be highly customizable. It's a Brave New World my fellow fragheads — so pay attention.



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## TRIBES 2

The second *Tribes* will be a revolution in customization and player community



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## HALO

The prettiest belle at the ball is Bungie's bid for multiplayer dominance



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## TEAM FORTRESS 2

Voice over net, class-based characters ... Valve wants your attention



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## SWAT 3

Tactical shooters' upcoming multiplayer entry



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## C&C RENEGADE:

So early in development only NOD soldiers were able to sneak out information

Tired of  
Playing  
with Yourself?

# Tribes 2

"I need an APC pickup! Guys  
... hey ... come on ... please"

## The Skinny

**D**ynamix carved its name into the belly of multiplayer first-person shooter gaming with *Tribes* back in '98 ... an online-only FPS with up to 32 players, outdoor/indoor terrain, vehicles, and gameplay variations like shared resources. It was an innovation on par with the original *Team Fortress*.

But round two of the team-centered games is about to start, and the competition has raised the bar. Don't look for the folks at Dynamix to get passed up and forgotten, though. They are working hard on *Tribes 2* and fans of the original are going to be pleased. Improved graphics? Check. Easier customization? Yup. Taking huge steps to create an even larger player community? You bet.

## The Community

*Tribes 2* is a sequel, as opposed to a new genre. It's going to have a new race, new weapons, and such, but Dynamix is hoping to revolutionize the way it brings new players into the community and gets them to stay. To accomplish this

they are creating new game editors and an Internet-like interface, complete with a web browser built right into the *Tribes* client.

The editors will allow players to easily create and modify maps while inside the 3D environment. If you don't like the placement of a certain boulder, you'll be able to fire up the editor, grab the boulder in the 3D environment, and delete it (or copy and paste it in someplace else). You'll also be

able to make new maps in the editor by simply pushing a button and watching the computer grow the terrain. Toss in some buildings, rocks, and trees and voila! ... a new tribal hunting ground ready for use. Skin makers can unbunch their panties — jpgs, gifs, and bmps will be acceptable formats and any image that fits required proportions will be usable.

The web browser aspect of the interface will allow players to cre-

ate clan pages within the *Tribes* client, use *Tribes 2*-only e-mail, and chat through the instant messenger service. Creating a registered tribe with its own server-based web page will be a five-minute affair. The web page will list members and their credo, distribute news (both public and tribe-only), offer a private message board and private chat room, and supply links to ranking sites. Every player will get a warrior



Dynamix is trying to push the player limit up to 64 players.

## ► RIDE ME BABY!

You want vehicles, you got vehicles. That's the Shrike-class T-Grav Scout in the picture, but he's not alone. There are going to be six vehicles in *Tribes 2*.

### SCOUT



- Draconian-class Heavy T-Grav APC
- Narhawk-class Light T-Grav APC
- Beowulf-class Ground Assault Vehicle
- Outrider-class Scout ATV
- Jericho-class Ground Transport

Tired of  
Playing  
with Yourself?

## ► PIECE OF MIND

Want to know what kinds games you'll be playing for the next years of your pitiful, malnourished lives? What better way to find out than asking the guys who are going to create those games. We sent out questions to the developers of *Tribes 2*, *Team Fortress 2*, *SWAT 3*, *Halo* and *C&C Renegade* to get their feedback on the future of teamplay.

With a panel of celeb/developers like this, we could have hosted our own damn conference and charged hundreds of thousands of dollars to naive people who wanted to be near our greatness. The minds of madness: Gabe Newell — Valve co-founder, Marc Frohnmayer — Lead Programmer of *Tribes 2*, Jaime Griesemer — Senior Design Editor of *Halo*, Cade Myers — Associate Producer of *SWAT 3*, and Louis Castle — *C&C Renegade* designer.

### Q: WHAT IS YOUR PREDICTION FOR MULTIPLAYER IN 2005?

**GABE NEWELL** → Gamers will have 1 Mbit/sec Internet connections, ~10 GHz CPU, about 1,000x 3D performance, and 100GB hard drives. I suspect that the line between real humans and AI players will be blurred, and the AI will be doing a lot more to build interesting social environments for players.

I know it sounds absurd, but there will probably be a game that has an audience of around 50 million players, generating a total aggregate viewership of 15 billion player minutes a month (compared to 260 million player minutes/month for *Half-Life* currently, and around a billion viewer minutes a month for a popular network television show).

**JAIME GRIESEMER** → You mean besides the incredible popularity of *Halo III: Bob's Revenge?* Let's just say I expect developers to create a new kind of "immensely intimate interactivity" with some highly detailed character modeling and a lot of complicated and extremely personalized peripherals.

**CADE MYERS** → By 2005, consumers will have better access and connectivity to the Internet. I believe that games will be developed for the multiplayer market first, and then single-player. I know games are doing that now, but by 2005 I think more developers will have that in mind as they begin to design their games. Hey, *SWAT 3* takes place in 2005, coincidence? I think not.

**MARC FROHNMAYER** → By 2005 I think we'll see some really cool "fusion" massively multiplayer games — space combat + mech combat + ground combat, planes + tanks + infantry (5000 player war games?), as well as real advances in making multiplayer computer games much more spectator friendly. I also think the user cost of playing will go down as the player base expands and the number of online games expands. I really see multiplayer becoming an aspect of almost every game within the next five years.

**LOUIS CASTLE** → Multiplayer modes will evolve, adding more atmosphere and storytelling into the multiplayer experiences. Action games will develop more character attachment and feel more like role playing rather than simply "running guns." There will be new action "sports" like deathmatch, and more emphasis will be placed on squad-based and other cooperative tactics.

page, so if you find someone in a game and you want him to join your tribe, you can check out his warrior page, send him a message, bring him into the tribe chat room, and sign him right up.

## The Look

Of course Dynamix is doing more than just improving the interface. They know that to compete with the big boys, graphics are going to need a kick in the ass. *Tribes 2* boasts higher res character models (about four times more polygons than *Tribes*) and has much more detailed terrain, so say bye-bye to endless rolling hills, and strap on some Timberlands.

This time, steep rock formations, trees, massive boulders, and complex buildings decorate

As tempting as it may be to fire that grenade, you must resist!

the battlefield. The terrain detail is also going to be scalable, so those of you with PIII 800s are going to get your money's worth. Five different world types represent the five playable tribes in the game: Lush world (as in lushly forested, not the drunk kind), frozen snow world, lava world, desert world, and an alien crossover world between lush and desert. This

time Mother Nature isn't going to play nice — she'll be dishing out rain to slip you up, fog to hide your enemies, and dangerous lightning to roast you when she's on the rag. Dynamix is also going to make the terrain an active part of the gameplay, so you'll be able to hide behind trees or large rock formations, and generally utilize a living and breathing battlefield.

The new race is called Bioderm, and they've got horns. We are quite unsure exactly how this affects the game.



# Tired of Playing with Yourself?



"Fly! Deadboy Fly!"

## The Game

Another massive change is the addition of single-player. Mimicking multiplayer missions with bots (similar to *UT* and *Quake III*), single-player games will push forward the previously-ignored *Tribes* backstory. Gameplay is changing on the field as well, with vehicles playing a greater role. In-

game customization will be allowed to a much higher degree and team organization is getting a big boost.

A twist for vehicles will be the six variations — three land and three air. They will represent a range of abilities, from single-occupant fast scout vehicles to large troop transports carrying a driver and up to six passengers. A

tank is also in the works that will carry a driver and a passenger with a turret-based weapon.

Speaking of turrets, an example of the customization changes that will happen in-game is the ability to switch out the type of gun in the turrets around a base. If your team is getting pounded because the mortar turrets can't keep up with lightly-armored fast attackers, you can get a couple guys out there to switch out the barrel to a faster tracking plasma turret, and watch the attackers turn to gibbs.

Team organization is getting a major overhaul, too. In *Tribes*, teammates would use chat to yell out their needs. Sometimes people would respond and other times they wouldn't. The new interface for *Tribes 2* will simplify that process.

When a teammate calls for a medic, everyone on the team will then get a new goal listing in the chat interface. Selecting the goal will cause your character to chat to everyone on the team that you're moving in to help. It will also pinpoint the location of the fallen comrade and help direct you with in-game 3D waypoints. As the battle continues, taking up goals will be that easy.

Snipers in high places like towers will see through the fog that hampers the players down below.

## The Final Word

Of the major multiplayer team games, *Tribes 2* will be the first to get into the hot hands of the gamer. It's scheduled for a mid to late summer release. The long-term effect of *Tribes 2* will be a change of expectation from gamers. Games that don't offer more support to the community like *Tribes 2* are going to seem harder to play and will probably have a shorter life span in the market. In-game support of the community is the primary method Dynamix is moving teamplay into the future with *Tribes 2*.

## WEAPONS OF WAR

### "HACHIMAN"



80MW Photon Core Sniper Rifle

### "GATECRASHER"



Varrwerks 52mm Grenade Launcher

### "DECIMATOR-VI"



Sabot-Styx Spinfusor (New Design)

### "VULCARION"



FH-20 100mm Plasma Cannon

### "HEADHUNTER"



Armor-Ported Missile Launcher

### "STARLOC 6 WIREN"



The Pea Shooter

In the future, all women will be ex-  
"Baywatch" stars who are married to  
a member of Motley Crüe - we think.

Tired of  
Playing  
with Yourself?



\*\*\* EXCLUSIVE \*\*\*

... Gabe Newell's response: Racial politics of the right masquerading as a drug issue ...

Tired of  
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with Yourself?

# Halo

## The Skinny

**S**ome of you might be wondering who the hell these Bungie guys are to make a move into the action racket. I mean, *Myth* wasn't an action game! But you'd be ignorant of Bungie's place in action gaming history. While Id was busy creat-

ing deathmatch on the PC scene, Bungie was dominating the Mac market for action games with the *Marathon* trilogy. Launched in 1994, *Marathon* and its sequels were the *Quakes* of the Mac world. Of course, Bungie has had some time off the action scene and is now in the PC business, so we forgive your total ignorance.

We've thrown a movie of *Halo* onto this month's PCXL disc to give you a taste of what we've seen up close. We've had the game demo'd to us and the engine is nothing short of stunning. *Halo* is still early in development, and because of that, Bungie is keeping somewhat tightlipped about aspects of the full multiplayer. We

were able to use our PCXL P.I. operatives to flush out some verifiable information from a Bungie employee, although the poor bastard didn't make it out of the interrogation room alive.

## The Community

Just about every Bungie game has had a rabid following in the Mac world, so they know the game-starved Mac-heads are on board. Bungie's challenge is creating a situation that the PC folk will find just as rewarding.

Bungie has let us know a few things about *Halo* and how it will bring PC gamers on board, but again, it's still early in development, so they're not giving us much. We do know customization is going to be a large part of the game. The engine has been constructed with player refinements in mind and map editors will ship with the game. Developers want to make *Halo* simple to manipulate, with the hope that *Halo* fans will create more mods and maps than even the *Myth II* community. In fact, Bungie expects *Halo* to be more customizable than *Myth II* — a bold statement indeed.

This is a FRICKING SCREEN SHOT! Absolutely amazing.



The wild party came to a sudden crash after Jimmy had one too many shots of Jaeger.

www.bungie.net

...Jaime Grifsemer didn't respond (Obviously he didn't take the question very seriously)



## PIECE OF MIND

**Q: DO YOU THINK VOICE OVER NET WILL HELP MULTIPLAYER GAMING?**

**GABE NEWELL** → *Team Fortress 2* will include voice, and we know that it makes a huge difference if you design it in from the beginning and accommodate it within your game rules.

**JAIME GRIESEMER** → Voice communication is not a new idea to game developers (*Bungie's Marathon* was the first to do it way back in '96) and it is an absolute blast when you are playing with friends, but there are some major drawbacks. Who wants to be confronted with the fact that the hulking marine covering your ass in a firefight is actually a 12-year-old that insists on calling everyone "dude"? Anonymity and role-playing are such powerful aspects of online gaming that I am not really sure that live voice is the right approach to communication in *Halo*.

**CADE MYERS** → Of course, I think it's essential for future games. Imagine being able to play *SWAT 3* and telling the other four members of your *SWAT* team to stack up on a door, or mirror for suspects and tell everybody that there are two bad guys on the left, one on the right. That's realistic.

**MARC FROHMAYER** → I think it already does, even in its currently limited state. Tools like Roger Wilco and Battlefield communicator are used by most of the top competitive tribes. Integrating it into the game will only serve to make it more useful to the gaming community as a whole.

**LOUIS CASTLE** → Yes. Being able to communicate with your team in real time adds a wonderfully useful dimension to gameplay.

**Q: IF TEAMPLAY IS THE NEXT STEP OF DEATHMATCH, WHAT IS THE NEXT STEP OF TEAMPLAY?**

**GABE NEWELL** → What I'd really like to see is a game that is strongly authored (i.e. with a story and a game progression) that you can play with your friends, and where there is an ongoing delivery of content from the game company itself.

**CADE MYERS** → Is this one of those SAT questions?

**MARC FROHMAYER** → I don't really see teamplay as the next step of deathmatch at all — just a different type of game — I think we just saw deathmatch come first because it generally requires fewer people and is "easier" from a network programming standpoint. That said, I think teamplay in FPS games has a LOT of growing room. What we're seeing today is just the start.

**LOUIS CASTLE** → More choices as far as what goals a team is accomplishing, what each member of team brings to the mix, and better communication among team members.

## The Look

*Halo* is the best looking game we've ever seen — period. Other developers should be marking themselves against the level of detail, textures, and simple beauty of this engine. From our very first viewing, most of us were shocked at what we were seeing — it looks like a damn interactive *Toy Story* without the cutesy kid stuff. Jaw-dropping.

Although the team is still undecided on voice over net, their goal is to make the character animation so detailed, players will be able to express identifiable personality traits. Don't salute your squad leader, because the enemy might just see it — maybe you want to trick your enemy into an attempt on someone who isn't the leader. The goal: Visual clues that will communicate just as effectively as chat, without the hassle of typing in lame messages. (Although the game will still support chat.)

## The Game

Unlike *Tribes 2* or *TF2*, *Halo's* single-player won't be a bot simulation of the multiplayer game. Instead, *Halo* will follow the clas-

sic model of gaming, i.e. both a stand-alone single-player with a story and multiplayer action.

Single-player will follow the story of a human ship that, upon being discovered by an alien attack fleet, leads the force away from Earth. Knowing they cannot outrun the "the covenant" forever, they land on an alien ring system. This ring system is uninhabited, leaving a mystery as to who created it. The ship's crew decides to make a last stand ... and that is where the game begins.

Multiplayer will be team-based with 20-20 players per team. Teams can group as aliens or humans, with each team receiving the specific weapons, vehicles, and equipment from the chosen race. Since there will be no character classes, what you do on the battlefield will determine your character — sometimes that means simply grabbing the weapon off a dead alien and kicking some ass. And, all weapons and vehicles in the game will be yours for the taking.

While kicking ass is something we do at PCXL 24/7, the rest of you don't have to worry about not

being super killers. Bungie is going out of their way to recognize players for more than fragging. If you are a good driver for instance, it would be displayed at the end of the game report. Honors will be rewarded to players for different types of behavior, such as completing tasks that help the team, assisting other players, skillful handling of a vehicle, and of course, good old-fashioned kills.

Being the sleuths that we are, we were able to weasel out one multiplayer team game from the developers, though we had to break into the room where Bungie's Jason Jones sleeps to get the info. In this specific multiplayer map type, a game would be divided into more than one round of play.

Prior to the match, attackers decide on weapons and equipment, as well as their insertion method. Some might want to bust in by jeep, others by air on scout craft, and a few brave souls dropping in from the sky above. Just like in real life, people are generally going to pick their insertion methods to align with the goals they have decided to attempt.

"Hey guys — which one of you wants to pull my finger? Come on. It'll be a real hoot."



# Tired of Playing with Yourself?

For instance, if a player were attacking a very large fortress, the first round would be the approach, with defenders on the outer wall or inner courtyard, defending the castle from both ground and air attacks. Attackers might attempt to blow down the front gate, destroy anti-aircraft guns, and find a side door. All goals would have to be completed for the round to be a success for the attackers.

As a player, you'll probably attempt only one goal, but if your team is getting wiped out, you might need to grab equipment from a dead friend and take on a new challenge.

Each successive round takes the attacking team deeper into the defenders' area. This is just one type of multiplayer game Bungie has in the works for *Halo*. They are quite serious about not letting the competition know what they've got up their sleeves, so get ready to be blown away, as you can expect even more goodies when *Halo* hits your greedy little hands.

I wonder if that suit chafes?

## The Final Word

*Halo* is set for a late 2000/early 2001 release. From a sheer beauty standpoint we know it will be successful. From a teamplay perspective, we are excited. Bungie's inside guy came very close to

telling us what they've got hidden — a trade secret they believe is so valuable that they just can't let it out until the competition is past the point of no return.

Frankly, we have been extremely curious for months, because what we've seen and heard about *Halo*

already has us drooling in anticipation. What could they possibly be holding back that will change multiplayer gaming even more? Will our lives ever be the same after *Halo*'s release? Only time (and a future report in PCXL, of course) will tell.

That gun has a name — it's called WhuP AsS.



"Squadron, look out for stealth fighters."



"urret, you're, you, lockin',  
"He's the stranger?"



"He's dead  
meat."



"Cover me, I gotta  
pay the pizza guy."



"I can't shake them.  
Can I get some love  
over here?"

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Playing  
with Yourself?

Tanks will have an AI,  
but can be controlled by  
the commander.

# Team Fortress 2 Brotherhood of Arms

## The Skinny

In the beginning, there was *Doom*, and it was good. Then there was *Quake* and it was better. And during the years of *Quake*, a mod was written that forever changed multiplayer gaming — *Team Fortress*. The smart guys at Valve (smart enough to make *Half-Life*) also had enough foresight to see the potential of *Team Fortress* and secured the rights to *TF2*, and merged with developers of the original *Team Fortress* in '98.

The first step of this new union was porting *Team Fortress Classic* to the *Half-Life* engine, which was completed last April. The second step is the creation of *Team Fortress 2: Brotherhood of Arms*, once scheduled as an add-on but now being released as a game on its own.

Anticipation for *TF2* is at a fevered pitch because of the many features are already known by the public ... scalable character models, parametric animation, 12 player classes, voice over net, interface evolution, bots, campaigns, missions, vehicles ... and that's just what is "public."

## The Community

Valve is out to make *TF2* intuitively team oriented and so player-friendly that people who normally wouldn't consider *TF2* not only play and join a clan, but play instead of watching television. Valve is entrenched in the idea that gaming is the new enter-

tainment medium for the masses and they are aiming to satisfy the throngs with this game.

Revamping both the in-game and client side interface is one method to suck in casual gamers, making it more user-friendly and adding built-in features to serve the needs of the players and clans. Similar to an advanced ICQ,

*TF2* will ship with what developers are calling a "tracker" program that *TF2* players can keep running even if they aren't playing. This tracker will be similar to ICQ, with instant messages, buddy lists, and player lists. It will also act as a search tool for a wide range of tracked statistics, such as highest rank, lowest rank etc. Client



advancements will mean easily downloading mods, maps, and skins, or information on game servers or tournaments.

Before playing the game online, the TF-challenged will be able to bone up on all aspects of playing the game versus bots. Much like *QIII* or *UT*, these bots will represent both team members and the enemies. This will allow newbies to get into the game and try different classes. There will also be an in-game trainer, basically a semi-intelligent bot that invisibly watches what you do, giving suggestions and strategies. As you improve, it just fades away into the background.

If that wasn't enough to help the faint of heart, there is a player class set-up called the "coach" that can help a newbie during a game. The coach will view the game from the newbie's perspective and help via an onscreen pointer and voice communication that only the newbie himself will hear. Given this level of assist-

ance, your grandmother could probably master the game, and that is exactly what Valve wants (no matter how much this thought may frighten you).

## The Look

Graphically, Valve is upping the ante for first-person shooters in two different ways. Firstly through MRM (multi-resolution mesh) technology they will introduce as yet unheard-of levels of detail for character models. Character models will range from highly detailed 3500 polys all the way down to 500 polys. Instead of turning into a slide show when 10 soldiers run around a corner, the engine will detail down the characters on the screen so as to not overload your specific system. The end result will be a steady framerate, which will allow you to return fire, rather than watching helplessly as you are slaughtered.

Secondly, they are introducing "parametric animation," which essentially adds AI to the animation system. Instead of a character being limited to running or shooting, this new character animation will show running, shooting, getting shot and up to four other actions all happening to the character simultaneously. For example, you might see an enemy run-



Tired of  
Playing  
with Yourself?

"Just stick that head out one more inch sucka."

ning across the field opening fire, stepping on a grenade, and presumably shitting his pants — all at the same time. It's simply amazing to see. The computer will literally generate the actions on the fly. The result is realism not seen in other shooters.

## The Game

Communication is an important part of *Team Fortress 2*. In-game communication will include type-written chat, but the big advance-

ment will be voice communication. Players will have the ability to speak to one another in-game (the onscreen characters actually lip-sync what you say — or something pretty close to it). The commander class character will be able to speak to the entire team, whereas your typical grunt will only speak with those around him or his squad mates.

Getting your team to act like a unit is going to be an important aspect of success. The comman-

## PIECE OF MIND

Q. WHAT TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE TO BRING TEAMPLAY TO THE MASSES?

**GABE NEWELL** → Currently I'm thinking a lot about how the AI can help create a better social and team-oriented experience to gaming. I'm not thinking about bots, but more of a coordination and planning role.

**CADE MYERS** → How about phones/phone lines that can handle an online connection and a phone call at the same time? I know there are products that are focusing on allowing the consumer to talk while online, but only to people in that game. What if you could play and talk to whomever you wanted? That'd be nice. Or maybe free TV trays included with games. I figure people have a hard time getting to snacks while playing their games. If you give them a tray it might help.

**MARC FROHNMEYER** → I don't think good teamplay is technology driven, except for just good networking technology — a good teamplay game will generally be fun for more players than a strictly deathmatch, resulting in a larger burden on the network code, to present a smooth and enjoyable experience to each player. I think the real advances in teamplay will come in game design — providing better tools of communication for players.

**LOUIS CASTLE** → Better connectivity through broad band access and improved network communications features like multicasting. A great improvement in server CPU power and storage capacity will also help more people have a satisfying experience.

Check out those textures ... reminds us of Rome, except for that guy with the gun.



# Tired of Playing with Yourself?



Rugs and vases aren't for sale.

The game will ship with 20 different missions, some missions grouped together into campaigns. Each mission in a campaign will affect each succeeding mission, and each mission may have several goals. For instance, in the invasion campaign, which mimics the infamous D-Day, the second mission requires the attackers to destroy two of four targets, but if the attackers destroy all four, they open up more paths on the next map. Valve is hoping this adds up to a cinematic experience, à la *Saving Private Ryan*.

## The Final Word

*TF2* is admirably ambitious, in the same way that *Half-Life* was ambitious. Valve wants to replace your television! By lowering the entry level to multiplayer games down so low that even the most timid will try playing, they plan on cracking open the mass market like an over-ripe nut. And that is where *TF2* will change gaming. Because if they start to make games easy for anyone to use, everyone will use 'em. If everyone is playing games, that can only make life that much better.

der character will be able to manipulate a team to victory through verbal commands, as well as on-screen waypoints and directions. To the commander, the game will nearly be a realtime strategy. In fact, two players can square off as commanders with bot squads if they so desire. Com-

manders will also control the tanks and other vehicles on the battlefield. So when your squad is hanging out behind the tank, you'll be kissing the ass of that commander as he uses it to smash up the defenders, thus allowing your team to rush in like wild baneshees and overtake a point.

## ► G.I. JOES AND SHIT

There are 12 character types in *TF2*, though the coach isn't a combat class.

**MARINE** → The standard army grunt, armed with a sturdy assault rifle and carrying a disposable SMAW (One shot Rocket Launcher)

**MACHINE GUNNER** → Heavy backup is essential for laying down fire while your Marines and Rangers advance. If he can find a sandbag to rest his machine gun's tripod on, he can pin down an entire enemy squad.

**SNIPER** → The ever-efficient TFC Sniper, with a few extra tricks up his camouflage sleeve.

**COMMANDO** → The only class capable of destroying large installations, the Commando often needs protection for the few undisturbed seconds it takes to set his charges.

**FLAME THROWER** → The perfect class for cleaning out the enemy squads held up in bunkers and trenches. You just burn 'em out.

**OFFICER** → The core of a squad, he increases morale, and hence the combat abilities of all his teammates. His IR goggles and smoke grenades make him the perfect class to lead an attack.

**RANGER** → The lightest and fastest combative class, the Ranger's the perfect choice to lead the charge against enemy emplacements. A quickly maneuvering Ranger is a constant threat to an enemy flank.

**FIELD MEDIC** → The most important team player in the game. His ability to revive dying teammates, coupled with his ability to supply and repair teammate's armor, makes him essential to any squad.

**ENGINEER** → The heart of defensive squads. His ability to make mounted machine guns and carry them to strategic locations for other players makes him a key class in operations where you're trying to gain and hold ground.

**SPY** → The infiltration and assassination class, the Spy maintains his ability to disguise himself as an enemy. He's perfect for taking out lone enemies and disappearing without a trace.

**INSTRUCTOR (A.K.A. COACH)** → The Instructor's not actually a physical player in the game. His only function is to train other players. He sees through the eyes of his trainee and, through the use of a laser pointer and voice link, teaches the trainee how to play.

**COMMANDER** → The class responsible for the team's strategy, the Commander sees the entire battle from above. He has an interface identical to most RTS games, enabling him to give orders, set waypoints, move vehicles, use voice to chat to team members, and ultimately lead his team to victory.

... Matt — Could I get some crack rock please, I would like some crack ...



A whole mess of fire-pissers throwing out kick-ass by the gallon.

Tired of  
Playing  
with Yourself?

# SWAT 3 Battle Plan

## The Skinny

The tactical shooter market has, for the most part, launched its second generation of games: *Rainbow Six: Rouge Spear*, *Spec Ops 2*, *Delta Force 2*, and now *SWAT 3*. While no one knows at this time what the third generation of tactical shooter will look like, we do have a good look at the last of the second generation.

Few games executed teampay as well as *SWAT 3*, but unfortunately, the retail package didn't come with multiplayer (if you'll remember our review that "made baby Jesus cry"). With *Battle Plan*, they plan on rectifying that — in spades. Thanks to the dedication of the *SWAT 3* development team and the input of grognard fans, this expansion will be

adding six new missions, a level editor, and over 12 new weapons for SWAT members and "bad guys" alike.

## The Game

The game will still be focused around the element leader and his command of four team members. But this time the team members will be your pals (or some freak off the Internet if you can't manage a whopping three friends) and the bad guys can have human brains behind them. Players can meet on WON.net, or use direct IP connections, before splitting up into two teams of up to five, with the host as the leader. Co-op play for all the original single-player missions (as well as the six new ones) will be available, as will human vs. human missions.

Look into  
my eyes!

## The Interface

Communication between team members will be clear, with visual markers on the players' interface, so when the leader issues a "breach and clear" order to his team, they will see an arrow pointing at exactly what the leader is talking about.

Both sides are going to have weapons and equipment specific to them alone — so you won't see a SWAT member using a Russian AK-47, and terrorists won't be able to use the M4 assault rifle. Firearm fans will get to twitch their trigger fingers on new weapons, including the Mark 23 SOCCOM handgun, the Steyr AUG, the MP5 and MP5SD, old favorite HK UMP45, the Glock 21, and the terrorist's mainstay — the AK-47.

## The Final Word

Do you like free? We sure do, especially when it involves free patches for *SWAT 3* that have *Battle Plan* goodness without *Battle Plan* pricing. The first patch will give players co-op ability for all of the original 16 missions online. The second patch, slated for release in August, will give you the new weapons and the ability to play as terrorists.

*SWAT* fans are going to be crapping their drawers to get their hands on the skin editor and Warcraft-based level editor. Teampay fans will love all these goodies right out of the box, and the development tools for strong mod support should make this game bust in the door, lay down the law, and take us all downtown.



"What's playin at the movies? Death Sucka!"

PHOTO: SULLIVAN

... Jason — Are we talking the crack on a stripper?

# C&C Renegade

## Keep 'em coming!

If you take the beating heart of the C&C franchise and dunk it in a bucket of 3D action, what you pull out is going to be Westwood's latest project. You'll still be playing as a GDI or NOD, but this time you'll be playing from a first- or third-person perspective.

All the buildings will serve their original purposes — you'll be able to go into the war factory and hop into a medium tank or humvee, swing by the barracks to grab a flame thrower or minigun, and stop by the Comm Center to check out the lay of the land.

In a typical game you will want teammates to take out those pesky SAM sites so you can fly in with your Orca and blow away the Obelisk of Nod. In turn, your buddies can move into the enemy base without becoming a TV dinner. We will finally be able to team up in the single-player game, since they're all co-op ready. A lot of focus is going into giving the player the feeling he is actually looking through the eyes of standard C&C units, so the terrain and vehicles will be modeled closely to the ones from *Tiberian Sun*.

Okay, who is really going to play those pansy GDI guys?

Tired of  
Playing  
with Yourself?



Donna doesn't really want you. She wants us, so deal with it already.





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You were not born noble,  
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  - + Dominate the world's marketplaces.
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The courage to change the things I can. And the wisdom to know when to zone.



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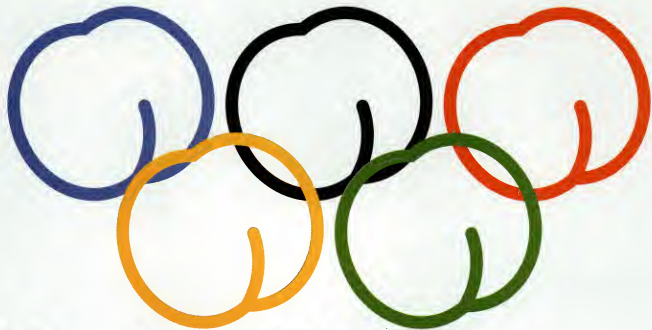
THE RUINS OF KUNARK



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# The Ass Olympics

## AN EPIC BATTLE OF INEPTITUDE

**W**elcome to the First Annual PC Accelerator Ass Olympics. Never before have this many notorious games been gathered in one place for a competition so glorious, so magnificent, and so very necessary. As a spectator, you will behold a series of events that will cull the bad from the good, leaving only a handful of real losers to grasp the medals of victory. From all over the world, games of all genres have convened to vie for the gold with their unique abilities to bore, frustrate, disappoint, and crash. Only one common thread ties these champions of low expectations together — they are all masters of the fine art of ass.

### THE TRYOUTS

All comers were welcome except for flight simulations and *Myst* clones, because, although the judges are all experts in assology and hold crapometry degrees from prestigious institutions, they are completely ignorant of games that serve freakish sub-niche cults of gaming. Despite the embarrassing attempts of top-sellers like *Half-*

*Life* and *Quake 3 Arena* to sneak into the ranks of ass, their undeniable quality immediately disqualifies them — only eligible aspirants were allowed past the gates. Those games that were admitted were subjected to our brutal battery of special examinations: Their boxes were scrutinized for vital screenshots-that-aren't-in-the-game, past reviews were scanned for words such as "worthless" and "worst shit ever," and some were even re-installed for the final, torturous evaluations.



Here's the biggest roach motel ever sold north of Mexico.



Huge explosions! Infantry dropped from orbit! Mammoth tanks! If only the game played like it was advertised!

### NOTABLE PERFORMANCES:

Game box promised stunning night missions, game didn't have them: *Tiberian Sun*

Sold as many copies as letters in their titles: *Dominion: Storm over Gift 3* and *Die by the Sword*

Box big enough to transport a truckload of Mexican migrant workers over the border: *Ultimo Ascension: Dragon Edition*



"Ahhhh! This game sucks!"

Released despite the knowledge that the game lacked any AI whatsoever: *Extreme Paintbrawl* and *Ultimo: Ascension*

The worst shit ever — *Skydive!*

# EVENT: BUG VOLUME

A good showing in this event requires the game to manifest bugs that not only irritate, annoy, and hinder the player, but also stop their progress through said

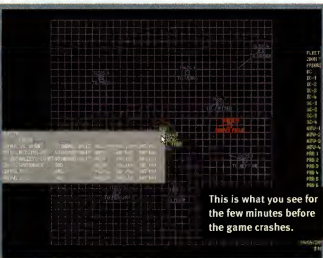
game with aptly-named "gamestoppers." Extra points are given for peripheral effects, such as poor technical support or endless patches.



## ULTIMA ASCENSION

9.9

Monsters that didn't move and save games that dropped you to the desktop ... Even with the *Dragon Edition*, judges could barely believe that all that buggy code actually fit into one box. An utter lack of support, the final (yet still buggy) patch, and the total shutdown of support forums puts this champion over the top.



This is what you see for the few minutes before the game crashes.



## BATTLECRUISER 3000

9.1

Although long in the tooth, *BC 3000's* stunning performance could never be forgotten. The bizarre commands (Alt-Ctrl-E to fire weapons) in many cases didn't work, and constant crashing was interrupted only by brief and frustrating bouts of gameplay.

## OTHER SHOWINGS



### DAGGERFALL

8.2

Two years later it's still being patched. We hear that somewhere in Idaho there is a group of kids who finished this game who even hardcore pen and paper RPG nerds hate and fear.



### ULTIMA ONLINE

7.5

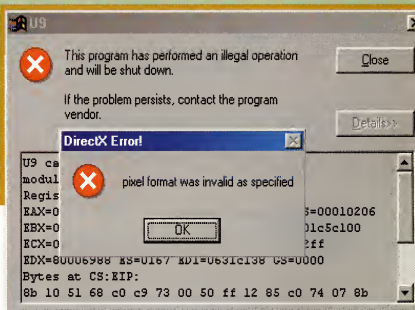
While *UO* scores big points for not being able to log on, it scores even bigger for not being able to stay on. Scores biggest for being too lag-ridden to play while on.



### BRAVEHEART

7.0

Ordered garrisons that never show up, armies that will not re-direct, and crashes or failure to run outright — you've got to applaud designers' tenacity in ensuring failed gameplay. Bonus points for ruining a perfectly good license.



In the end, Lord British and Origin defeat you with the ultimate foe.



## SHADOW COMPANY

8.5

Your commandos could climb invisible ladders and phase through floors right into a small pool of water that would instantly kill them. They also loved to get shot — so much, in fact, that they wouldn't return fire or move at all until it killed them. Good job!



## EVENT: DISAPPOINTMENT

Gamers are a randy bunch. They begin websites and e-mail campaigns for games that aren't even being made ... yet. After years of dedication and free (yet priceless)

promotion, sometimes the game is actually released and the payoff comes. In this event, games will be competing for high depression levels of disappointed fans.

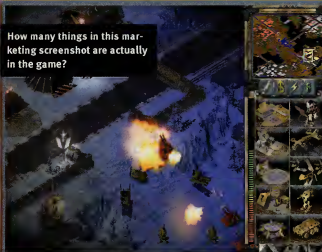


### ULTIMA: ASCENSION 10.0

This game scored more than a frat boy with a pocket full of ruffles. Fanbase? Huge. First 3D *Ultima*? Uh-huh. Took its sweet time to come out? Sure did. Hyped as the biggest, deepest *Ultima* ever, when it was finally released, it had the ideal combination to score an Ass Olympics "so" — thousands of fanatical devotees and more bugs than a summer picnic in Louisiana.

The real reason *Ultima Ascension* was released unfinished ...

How many things in this marketing screenshot are actually in the game?



### C&C2: TIBERIAN SUN 9.2

Gamers were dazzled by amazing screenshots and were expertly bamboozled into buying the game. HAI! It was the same pixelly crap they bought in rebashes like *Red Alert* and *Dune 2000*. The lack of Internet play and a direct TCP/IP option rounded out *Tiberian Sun's* performance.



This is what would happen if the leaders of CORE and ARM were actually D&D nerds.



### TA: KINGDOMS 8.9

The success of *Total Annihilation* gave Cavedog a rare opportunity to one-up the competition. Aside from Westwood, not many companies get the opportunity to make a mod for their game engine and push it out as a new game. What's more, they made the game suck.

## OTHER SHOWINGS



### INTERSTATE '82 8.0

In light of the massive success of *Interstate '76*, how could the judges not be impressed by the colossal wall of unsold I-82 copies? Apparently PC gamers really didn't want *Vigilante-82*.



### KLINGON HONOR GUARD 7.3

Chunky and uninspired levels populated with sub-moronic AI enemies put another bullet into the "Star Trek games are all ass, anyway" gun. A flop like this can only garner admiration from those well-versed in the ass-tacular arts.



### TOMB RAIDER: THE LAST REVELATION 5.6

Eidos probably delivered the least impressive effort. Gamers had been prepped to not expect much, so the disappointment lacked the finesse required to reach the medal platform.

# EVENT: DIFFICULTY

Always the most grueling of events, the idea is to thwart players' attempts to have fun by constantly impressing them with the idea that they are a total loser. Frequent and unavoidable death

or puzzles that are nearly impossible are necessary in this event. It is also important to leave the player with a feeling of inadequacy when he finally quits in frustration and uninstalls.



## ALIENS VS. PREDATOR

9.3

Here we almost have a cheater. The standard endless enemies who can always see you and kill you with one shot is standard fare, but the one-two combo of huge levels and no in-game save points comes suspiciously close to bribing the judges. We're still looking for anyone who's played the entire game on "Normal."



Time to restart the level for the 500th time!



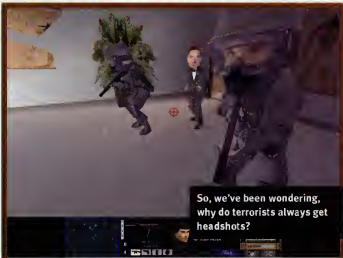
In 2213 AD, high-powered laser pistols are made of comfortable coffee cup styrofoam.



## SYSTEM SHOCK 2

8.5

When you force players to use weapons that disintegrate faster than a dime bag at a high school party, with sparse ammunition, against monsters that constantly respawn behind them and aren't particularly bothered by being shot anyway, you earn sterling credentials in this competition.



So, we've been wondering, why do terrorists always get headshots?



## ROGUE SPEAR:

7.9

All baddies who can snap-shoot the player in the eye from 100 yards with a handgun, while the player is crouched behind 50% cover in total darkness ... You gotta give it to these guys, *Rogue Spear* knows how to do difficult right!

## OTHER SHOWINGS



## ALPHA CENTAURI

7.0

Judges were stumped by the Diplexing Triluminary Theories which folded the functional Hyperdynamic Bantricrometer into Vindricular and Thermal Homogynistic Threads, earning *Alpha Centauri* an "honorable mention."



## THIEF

6.9

Ahhh, sneaking about in the dark, avoiding enemies and pilfering trinkets ... what a life! But when one is hunted by creatures that can see in the dark or forced to avoid innumerable guards, that's when the fun is really crushed!

## THE ASSMASTER: UA



For games that succeed in offending the player by failing to be fun in a wide variety of ways, there is a special accolade: The Assmaster. This year, the award was earned by the most well-known of flops, *Ultima: Ascension*. We salute those who worked so hard on this game — keep up the bad work! p. 40 ▶



Battle of Tatooine

## EXALTED HERO OR FORGETTABLE

That heavy feeling on your shoulders is called the burden of command. Get used to it. With real-time ground





1



### General Veers

Served: Battle of Yavin, Battle of Sarapin, Battle of Ruul, Battle of Hoth (wounded), Battle of Endor, Battle of Tatooine (survived)

2



### 2nd Lieutenant Gorga

Served: Battle of Yavin (wounded), Battle of Hoth, Battle of Abridon, Battle of Coruscant, Battle of Endor, Battle of Tatooine (killed)

3



### Sergeant Krung

Served: Battle of Hoth, Battle of Abridon, Battle of Coruscant, Battle of Endor, Battle of Tatooine (wounded)

4



### Sergeant Major Corillon

Served: Battle of Yavin (wounded), Battle of Sarapin (wounded), Battle of Coruscant, Battle of Endor, Battle of Tatooine (killed)

5



### Lieutenant Major Antilles

Served: Battle of Yavin, Battle of Sarapin, Battle of Ruul (wounded), Battle of Coruscant, Battle of Endor, Battle of Tatooine (survived)

6



### 1st Lieutenant Spiker

Served: Battle of Abridon, Battle of Coruscant, Battle of Endor, Battle of Tatooine (survived)

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**EVENT:  
BOREDOM**

Some games hook the player from the first moment and drag them along, squealing and laughing with joy all the way to the end. When they finish, the whole event

seems to have taken only a handful of hours (rather than the hundreds it really did take). The games that spit on this concept enter this event for recognition.

**PRINCE OF PERSIA 3D****9.7**

What could have been a shameless *Tomb Raider* rip-off or a childish 3D platformer instead transformed eyelids to lead by failing to aspire to either. The sluggish main character drags his feet through square, tedious levels until the player breaks his nose on the keyboard, locked in a coma. Scandal ensued when copies of the game were confiscated as a narcotic substance.



Man, this is the life — I get a towel on my head and all the urns I can push!



There are more units on this screen than units of the game sold in stores.

**DOMINION: STORM OVER GIFT 3****9.2**

This snoozer has little men and tanks attacking and defending their bases, with special units and multiple sides which are slightly different (or at least different colors). The graphics are so-so, the sound effects are pedestrian, and the missions are all the same. All RTS — no fun.



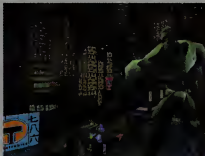
This is part of a maze of twisty little passages, all alike.

**MORTYR****8.8**

It's got all of the Nazis, dogs, and gunsmoke of *Wolfenstein 3D* — without fun getting in the way! What more could you ask for? Level after level of brown and gray gave judges *Quake* flashbacks. Question: When is a crappy console port not a console port? Answer: When it's *Mortyr*.

**▶ OTHER SHOWINGS****SINISTAR UNLEASHED****8.0**

We thought that the heritage of the original arcade classic, which was more fun than a two-legged donkey, would spoil the chances of this one being a winner. Three levels and one uninstall later, we realized how wrong we were.

**SLAVE ZERO****7.7**

We were nervous when we saw the hulking robot running and climbing through the dystopian city, blasting enemies and smashing cars. Our fear turned to admiration when we discovered that climbing and blasting was all he did.

**AGE OF EMPIRES 2****0.2**

Did anyone really expect this to score at all? It's got *trebuchets*, man.

## EVENT: INTERFACE

As long as 3D shooters keep coming out with default directional keys not set for "WASD," this event will heap praise on the games that damage the player's brain and fingers with the most

mind-bending interfaces. There is nothing more generous a programmer can do than give players a control setup that only a team of multi-appendaged robots could figure out.



Despite having these big tits and a gun, we couldn't get anything done.



### TRESPASSER

9.7

Although you play as a "woman," she is merely a pair of boobs with a broken mannequin arm on one side. This freakish mammary-robot, although geekily sexy, is totally incapable of accomplishing anything. The mechanics of play were alien enough to pull in the Interface Problems gold.



How many flesh-eating worms do you need to stuff in your ear before this makes sense?



### BATTLECRUISER 3000

9.2

Certainly the most devious participant, *Battlecruiser* defied players to find the interface, when in fact there was none! The keyboard commands were kept a guarded secret, privy only to members of the obscure cult GalCom. Players needed to be smart to play this — Derek Smart, in fact.



Nobody figured out how to play the game — but they sure figured out how to return it.



### CONQUEST EARTH

9.1

Flaunting a smorgasbord of interface flaws, *Conquest Earth* shows how it's done. The alien interface is labeled in ... ALIEN! You can't read it! Your weapons fire one time per click — so you have to click fast! You must use tiny and poorly labeled buttons to order troops or they just stand there and die.

## ▶ OTHER SHOWINGS



### ABOMINATION

8.8

There used to be a DOS game, *X-Com*, that was loaded with multiple interfaces, in VGA, and it was so very easy and fun to use. This game is a perfect remake, except that its interface is designed by the Borg.



### BRAVEHEART

7.8

The movie costed only eight bucks, but you have to give up your sanity to see the same things in the game. Players are assaulted with more buttons than the space shuttle, with just as much confusion delivered when pressed.



### SYSTEM SHOCK 2

1.2

No matter how hard it tried to lose us with its huge variety of interface screens, we never felt lost or confused for even a moment. The informative in-game tutorial stripped it of what few extra points it might have scored. Booo!



## EVENT: "SPECIAL" OLYMPICS

Some games are suited from the design stage to be winners in the Ass Olympics. We believe they are surely designed by evil robots who, in their world, have long since disintegrat-o-rayed every-

thing that even resembled fun. The stunned, silent stare that these titles earned from judges is a true testimonial to their preposterous attempts to be a game. Congratulations.



### SKYDIVE! GOLD MEDAL 10.0

Instantly planted into the "anals" of gaming Assdom, *Skydive!* has the player falling from a plane, until he hits the ground or pops his chute. This is less fun than running into a grey wall over and over again (we know, trust us). For having absolutely no redeeming qualities, and compiling the worthlessness with an exclamation point, we give *Skydive!* the gold.



One crappy sprite vs. one crappy texture: FIGHT!



SCORE: 500

Score achieved in 10 min



If only that were a bomber's crosshair above his head.



### EXTREME BULLRIDER SILVER MEDAL 9.2

The idea is to translate the fun and excitement of a real rodeo show into a game. Well, there is a bull and there are rodeo clowns, but the inexplicable lack of unruly drunks, underage chicks, and odors so unspeakable they'd kill the undead had us wondering how hard they tried.



"Shooting bucks" is just another way of saying "wasting money."



### DEER HUNTER 3 BRONZE MEDAL 8.8

This gem brings us back to the most passionate of American pastimes: Drinking and smashing stuff. After an hour we felt an overpowering desire to dull our senses with alcohol. But, after 10 more minutes, we were smashing the game CD, the box, and the computer — and even that wasn't much fun.

Thank God there are bad games out there — how the hell else would we make a living?

## OTHER SHOWINGS



### HARLEY DAVIDSON: RACE ACROSS AMERICA 8.3

Head out on the highway ... looking for a fun game ... Players jump on a hawg and see America — only the journey is \$50 more expensive than the kiddie rides outside Wal-Mart.



### WILD WILD WEST 6.7

The movie sucked ass, right? So how on Earth did this game not win? Your stiff, ugly characters lurched their way through this dull adventure and yet, this game wasn't total crap. Frustrating the judges is not good for your score.

## AND FINALLY ...

We would like to thank all participants for their efforts in striving to set gaming back as far as is humanly possible. We laughed, we cried, we wondered "why?" We also know that even as we speak, there are crapsmiths giving themselves a hernia to bring us next year's athletes. Will there be something more spectacularly failed than *Ultima: Ascension*? Can anything be worse than *Skydive!*? We hope it's not possible, but even these conquerors of quality may meet their match — next time.



BUILD AN EMPIRE -  
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Animated Violence

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## Man vs. Machine

Before you buy, read this cautionary tale of a boy and his Athlon

**Y**ou're reading the journal of a broken man. For the last two years I've championed AMD's processors. When they recently unveiled the Athlon (K7), I rejoiced, for finally AMD had delivered to the faithful a CPU that would kick Intel's collective asses ... or so I thought. Through the fall of 1999, I happily read every review that showed Athlon

inside a computer case. I read reviews, I visit techie websites, and most importantly, I pay attention to AMD's Athlon FAQs.

Like most gamers, I'd rather not replace existing components unless it is absolutely necessary. Since I had much confidence in the quality of my

breeze, as was plugging in my components (see list below). The M7MKA recognized the correct 650MHz setting for the CPU, and I was off to install Win 98.

The Windows installation was uneventful, as was setting up the latest drivers for my TNT2 video card and MX-300 A3D sound card. The system seemed super fast, and yes, I could turn on all the pretty lights and textures in *Quake III*, the Athlon laughing at the puny challenge. Actually it was laughing at me, as I was soon bedeviled by constant "protection fault" errors. In games, out of games, or just plain browsing, no more than 15 minutes passed before any program died back to the Windows desktop. Grrrrrrrrrr.

Any old Windows hand knows that protection faults mean memory problems. To be sure, I double-checked with the president of Falcon Northwest Computers, Kelt Reeves (he's on your speed dial, right?), who confirmed that the problem was with my memory.

Faced with the choice of buying a new motherboard, or buying all new PC100 memory, I chose the typical gamer route (i.e. "cheap"). So, I shelled out another \$126 for a Gigabyte GA-71X motherboard.



A re-enactment of George attempting to upgrade his PC.

Another board switch-out, another re-partitioning of Drive C, another installation of Win 98, and a mouth full of profanities later ... general protection faults continued to endlessly torment me. Time to buy some new DIMMs, I thought. One \$141 128MB stick and one \$70 64MB stick later, the computer system booted up finer than a Las Vegas showgirl.

besting Pentium III in clock speed and performance. Then, the same day I installed *Quake III Arena* on my K6 III/400, and wept profusely. I sadly watched as my framerate turned into a slide show with all the goodlies switched on. I knew the time to upgrade had come.

### MISCONCEPTIONS

Like most avid computer gamers, I've become tech proficient — building and rebuilding my own systems to get exactly what I want. Despite many humbling experiences, I like to think I know my shit

three-month-old 250-watt power supply, I decided to stick with it. I already had additional fans in my mid-tower ATX case, so I felt comfortable there as well. I didn't know what to expect from my memory, but I decided to give it a try before replacing it out of hand.

### GONNA BUILD ME A ROCKET

Based on my previous research, I came to the conclusion that a 650MHz Athlon offered the best performance for the best price. Unlike the K6s, Athlons use a cartridge similar to the Pentium III/II. Fortunately, switching out my old K6 III/400 board for a \$126 Biostar M7MKA motherboard was a

### THE POWER LIST

Here's PCXL's official cool/nox/cool list for the month. If you don't own what's here, then maybe you're just not that cool.

#### GET:

- PIII Boo (Until there is one faster ... next month)
- GeForce 256 DDR 3D card (still the best)
- Microsoft Intellimouse Explorer (just get it ... now)
- SoundBlaster Live!/Vortex sound card (until the next generation)
- Microsoft Slidewinder Gamepad (oldie but a goodie)
- Onstream 30 GB digital drive (for backups, porn, whatever)
- Hunsaker Battle Chair (for back support, porn, whatever)

- Microsoft Internet Keyboard Pro (everything at your fingertips)
- Crunchy bits at the bottom of Long John Silver meals
- The PCXL demo disc and babe calendar

#### AVOID:

- 53 Virge-powered anything
- Loading drivers in "high mem"
- Timothy O'Leary's line of psychedelic monitors
- Scourting joke speakers
- Scourting laxatives
- Crack

### LIMEY

IN THE INTEREST OF FAIRNESS, WE ASKED LIMEY THE WISERACKIN' LIMA BEAN TO TELL US ABOUT HIS EXPERIENCE WITH THE ATHLON. GEORGE ARGUES THAT LIMEY IS A FICTIONAL CHARACTER, BUT WE THINK THAT'S A LAME EXCUSE.

Ass-law'n? Are you wankers lispng again? Look, bub, I might just be an insignificant splat of vegetable spew, not some pasty silicon sissy with scratch to blow, but if you want my bit on this whole Ass-long ramble, here it is: Screw you! Yeah! You heard me ... what kind of dumb-nuts spends \$453 smackaroos just to get an Ass-lick that don't work? Screw him! Screw everybody! Who the hell cares? I don't! So screw you and screw the floppy-assed mule you rode in on. Now lick my stump!

Limey is available to be your spokesbean! Send money and/or cases of beer to:

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WISERACKIN' PR WHORE  
C/O PCXL  
150 NORTH HILL DRIVE  
BRISBANE, CA 94005





## TECH NEWS THAT COULD SAVE YOUR SOUL

## SOCKET TO ME

Ever wonder what happened to Thrustmaster after they sold their hardware business and company name to Guillemot last year? We didn't think so — but we'll tell you anyway. Now calling itself CenterSpan Communications, the company famous for quality flight sticks (and infamous for The Fragmaster) has jumped into the world of Internet multimedia interaction, announcing Socket, a free, downloadable instant messaging product similar to ICQ but designed to be even more accessible for the more mainstream consumers.

Socket users will be able to see common applications (including games) and instantly launch and connect those applications over the Internet. While CenterSpan isn't trying to compete with hardcore gaming utilities like GameSpy (it doesn't detect other users' ping rates), casual gamers may find Socket an easy springboard into multiplayer gaming. Public beta testing should be going by the time you read this, with a wide release later in the year. For more info, go to [www.centerspan.com](http://www.centerspan.com).

## CUSEEME 4 FREE

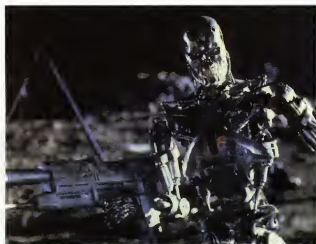
Online perverts on the prowl for that rare 18-year old nympho willing to give you a live video glimpse of her naughty bits ... for free ... now have an option besides Netmeeting. If you're willing to settle for G-rated face-to-face chat only, CU-SeeMe has announced that webheads can now participate in live video teleconferencing via their website with a free, one-time software download, even if you don't own a video camera. (Obviously, you won't be seen without a camera, but you can still gawk at us to three of those who do.) The full version of CU-SeeMe Pro is still available for \$69 if supervised chat cramps your style. Go to [www.cuseemeworld.com](http://www.cuseemeworld.com) to check it out.



An average CU-SeeMe user? Yeah, right.

## CORRECTION

In our review of the Diamond Viper II (PCXL, March 2000), we stated that it did not come with any full games. In fact, it does come with a full version of Acclaim's *Trickstyle*. We regret the error and have fired Rob Smith to make up for it, even though he had nothing to do with it. That whole PC Lamer Editor-in-Chief thing was just a cover-up.



My brother uses an Athlon ... wanna make something of it?

## LET'S ROCK!

Assuming my victory complete, I fired up *Unreal Tournament* and slapped around some bots. No problem. Next, it was back to *Quake III Arena*. Just as before, smooth, fast gameplay with no regrets. I eyed the wall clock after five minutes — woo hoo! At 14 minutes, no glitches and no crashes back to Windows, but into my third level of bot slaying, in mid-attack, the system froze solid.

Hoping it was just a random error (I hadn't yet experienced total freezes prior to that moment) I went straight back into *Quake III*. Another freeze after 11 minutes. Reboot. Then *Unreal Tournament* fired up after six minutes. Reboot. *Planescape Torment* was even less blessed, locking up after only three minutes. Thinking it might be the TNT2 card, I yanked it out and threw in something radically different — a handy Matrox G400 Marvel. Reboot. Although all standard Windows applications ran solid, every game locked up tighter than a sorority girl's knees. I was cursed.

Faced with buying more memory, another power supply, or even a

whole new motherboard, I conceded defeat and surrendered unconditionally. My Athlon odyssey was at an end. The next day I ordered an Intel Pentium III 600EB Coppermine CPU and an Asus 133MHz P3V4X motherboard. With no other changes, it's been more than a week without a freeze, crash, or protection fault. My game PC is again happy.

## CONCLUSIONS

For years I have advocated that gamers are better off building their own PCs, rather than buying retail. But in my Athlon experience, I have to agree with Kelt Reeves at Falcon when he says, "People are better off buying their Athlon systems from someone like me."

I'm still an AMD supporter, but the Athlon was too squirrely for a do-it-yourselfer. Falcon can afford to test out a variety of components and then buy them in bulk. You, on the other hand, can't.

— GEORGE T. CHRONIS *hasn't quite figured out that he has to pay those credit card bills when they finfolly come in the mail*

## BENCHMARKS

## WINBENCH 99

	CPU	FPU
Athlon 650 →	58.6	3520
Intel PIII 600EB →	34.6	3220

## 3D MARK 2000

	RATING
Athlon 650 →	2703
Intel PIII 600EB →	2562

## SISOFT

	CPU	FPU
Athlon 650 →	1360	892
Intel PIII 600EB →	1442	1234

## SHARED COMPONENTS

ELSA Erazor III TNT2
192MB ECC PC100 DIMMs
9.1GB Seagate Cheetah Ultra3 Wide HD
Diamond MX-300 Sound Card
Toshiba 32x SCSI CD-ROM
SMC EZ Card 10/100 NIC

## Saitek GM2 Action Pad and Mouse

Not the "action" we were hoping for

PRICE → \$49.95  
 WEBSITE → [www.saitek.com](http://www.saitek.com)  
 BUNDLE → None



You know how they say that someone is going to build a better mouse trap, but it just doesn't get done? How 'bout when a stripper says that you're special, only you know that you're not special because she just gave a lap dance to your buddy? Oh, umm, maybe not that last one. But I digress...

The point is, why do real gamers rely on a game/keyboard in first-person games? Control. Keyboards aren't designed for games, but games inevitably get played on keyboards. So, news of the GM2 met with mixed emotions in the PCXL offices — elation, if they had indeed built a better mousetrap, and suspicion that it would be just another bit of plastic scrap for the Hall Of Ass Peripherals.

In fact, it's neither. The GM2 replaces the keyboard with a comfortable, table-top USB pad that naturally fits your palm, giving easy access to six assignable buttons (plus a shift button, giving you 12 button assignments in all), an 8-way hat, and a thumb wheel. Its mouse connects directly to the GM2, so you don't have to sacrifice an extra USB port. A standard two button/middle scrollwheel combo plus a side hat, the GM2 mouse resembles the MS IntelliMouse Explorer, but it's only a resemblance — poor tracking and occasional stuttering assures you of that. Any mouse can be used, but the pack-in must be connected at all times or your system won't detect the GM2 properly.

The GM2's hat takes the place of the WASD keys, giving movement control to either your index or middle finger — and that's the pad's

major failing. Even with practice, one finger can't match the precision of three. You can bypass the hat entirely, using the buttons for movement, but the button layout wasn't designed with that in mind.

Another pitfall is the thumbwheel, which, when activated, automatically circle strafes your character around enemies. It's supposed to be a feature, but considering how easy it is for your thumb to accidentally hit the wheel, it's also an easy way to die or at least look real stupid. And if you're left-handed then you're "SOL" — the GM2 supports right-handed mouse control only.

Programming is made easy with the Saitek Game Extensions software, or you can download presets from the Saitek website. Unfortunately, some of the presets don't make sense. For example, *Quake III* is autostored for a 4-way hat, instead of 8-way, making it impossible to move diagonally. Reprogramming the preset is an option, but why is it like that in the first place? In the "what the f—k" category, if you attempt to uninstall the SGE software, it wipes out your system tray. Rats! Foiled again!

The GM2 won't do anything for keyboard *Quake* masters, but if you're using any other peripheral, especially a gamepad, then it's definitely an improvement. And for a *Diablo*-style game, the ability to map keys to one controller is ace. One guy in our office loves it, using it all the time in *Unreal Tournament* (ditching the hat for button control), but in the end, these old dogs didn't want any part of these new-fangled tricks.

## + PLUSES

- + Intuitive keyboard replacement
- + Button layout conforms to hand

## - MINUSES

- The mouse sucks
- Hat switch no replacement for four directional keys
- Thumb wheel gets in the way
- Uninstall destroys your systay

RATING

## SAITEK GM2 VS. KEYBOARD

The Saitek GM2 is billed as having an advantage over keyboards in action games. Chuck pitted the GM2 pad/mouse combo against a Microsoft Internet Keyboard Pro/IntelliMouse Explorer in *Quake III* with some not-so-unexpected results.

## GM2 TRACKING:

Sluggish; I sometimes stop in mid-turn

## MOVEMENT:

Touchy; too easy to zig instead of zag

## STRAFING:

Auto-strafe too quirky; easy to accidentally go diagonal using hat

## JUMPING:

Reprogrammed jump for thumb button — very intuitive

## COMFORT:

Pad initially comfy but hat finger switch will cause pain

## FINAL SCORE:

Even the suckiest players beat my ass like a dominatrix

## KEYBOARD

Like a big stick of butter — my mouse has no balls and I love it

Fingers get cramped after a while, but control is on the money

Just right; two buttons for strafing is the way to go

The space bar is just as intuitive and die feels right

Control probably isn't good for your dig's over the long term

Strong finishes every time, any time

## MS Internet Keyboard Pro

PRICE → \$74.95  
 WEBSITE → [www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com)  
 BUNDLE → None

As you can probably tell from our Saitek GM2 review, the keyboard is our mistress. There are no "gaming keyboards" yet, but you can bet they're on the way. Until then, we have keyboards like the Microsoft Internet Keyboard Pro to warm our cold little fingers.

A plethora of 19 hot keys located on the top of the board make this an "Internet" keyboard, each giving you one-plus access to handy utilities like your browser and e-mail programs, calculator, speaker controls, and even "sleep." Even though some of the multimedia functions are handy, most browser controls are just as easily accessible by a mouse.

What we did like were the two discreet USB ports located on the upper righthand side, letting you hot-switch peripherals conveniently. The keyboard itself uses your PC's PS2 port, but you'll need a free USB port if you want to use the Pro's hub.

The keyboard is sturdy, with a detachable plastic palm rest and traditional layout. The keys offer more resistance than we're accustomed to (not exactly our first choice for light touch-typing), but



it's fine once you get the hang of it. On the other hand, gamers will appreciate the board's substantial feel, averting worries that it won't stand up to a *Quake*-sized pummeling. And that's what really matters, isn't it?

## + PLUSES

- + Handy USB hub
- + Hot keys are groovy

## - MINUSES

- Key mashing
- Browser hot key functions are redundant

RATING



# ALIENWARE

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56K CD-ROM Player  
Black ATX Mid-Tower Case w/300 Watt PS  
Black 107-Enhanced Keyboard PS/2  
Microsoft Intellimouse Explorer  
US Robotics V.90 56K Voice/Fax/Modem  
Microsoft Sidewinder Precision Pro  
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Aureal Vortex II Super-Quad Sound Card  
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US Robotics V.90 56K Voice/Fax/Modem  
Microsoft Sidewinder Precision Pro  
Microsoft Sidewinder Gamepad  
Microsoft Windows™ 98 SE OS  
Free installation & configuration of  
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**PRICE: \$3,299.00**  
Financing starting at: \$64.00/Mo., 50 Mos.

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Klipsch 4.1 ProMedia v.2-400 THX  
400-Watt Subwoofer/Speaker System  
Pioneer 10X/40X DVD Player  
HP 9100i CDR-W 8x/4x/32x CD Writer  
Black ATX Mid-Tower Case w/300 Watt PS  
Black 107-Enhanced Keyboard PS/2  
Microsoft Intellimouse Explorer  
US Robotics V.90 56K Voice/Fax/Modem  
Microsoft Sidewinder Precision Pro  
Microsoft Sidewinder Gamepad  
Microsoft Windows™ 98 SE OS  
Free installation & configuration of  
favorite games & optimal drivers

**PRICE: \$3,999.00**  
Financing starting at: \$92.00/Mo., 50 Mos.

### MONITORS

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DEVELOPER'S TRACK RECORD

HISTOGRAM AVG. SCORE

PAST SCORES

10  
9  
8  
7  
6  
5  
4  
3  
2  
1

WHO ARE THEY?

Innerloop Studios' previous work was on flight sims or something. Since we don't pay attention to games that make us sleepy, we'll consider *I.G.I.* to be their first effort, and from what we've seen so far, these Norwegians really know their shit.

# Project I.G.I.

Where "keepin' it real" doesn't make you sound ignorant

**F**irst, know this: *Project I.G.I.* (when its day comes) will either enrapture or enrage. There won't be any gray area. You see, gamers get really touchy about their favorite genres. They are loyal, moody, defensive, zealous. So this game is treading well into hardcore gamer heresy, and though it may earn the ire of legions of mouse-looking dorks worldwide, one thing must be acknowledged for the healing to begin: Most first-person shooters are ridiculous ...

Yup, ridiculous. Abso-freakin'-lutely weak. Uh-huh, I'm talking to you Romero-fellating propeller-heads out there. Just try running at FPS speed all the time, loaded with gear, performing jumps, making long-ass spang-on shots, all while taking falls and hits. Please try — and add some Tidy-Bowl to the gene pool.

Now take a big, bittersweet bite of *Project I.G.I.* from Eidos. What's this? I have to move at actual human speed? That far-off objective is gonna take me four minutes to reach? I can't take a three-story fall and dash to cover? What's this shrapnel shit? What do you mean, gravity affects my slug-trajectory? Who the hell do you think you are?

Welcome to the real world pal! And don't roll your eyes at me, Bot-boy. I know there are still a million ways Eidos could screw this game up. But for the moment, as the song says, "I'm a believer."

*Project I.G.I.* puts you in the boots of a present-day worldwide antiterrorist operative, usually deep in enemy territory and always human — no rocket-jumps, no telefrags, no swimming in the heavy water, and no singing in the acid rain.

The first thing about *I.G.I.* that threw me back was the slow,



"Nice Beaver." "Thanks, I just had it stuffed."

clean, solid zoom on a distant target — a target that, at mere mortal foot-speed, would take several minutes to reach in a straight line. That is, if someone yammering in a foreign language isn't trying to stop you. From mission to mission,

the enemies around you will speak in the varying local language, an obvious but nice touch.

As for the clean, organic look of the local terrain, you can thank the fighter-combat game *Joint Strike Fighter*. *Project I.G.I.* uses **P. 52**

## INFO BOX

DEVELOPER → Eidos  
PUBLISHER → Innerloop Studios  
RELEASE DATE → Summer 2000  
API SUPPORT → Glide, Direct3D

### INTEREST GAUGE



### THE HYPE

Can it really be? After seeming eons of fun but ludicrous FPS games, will we finally have a realistic one? Is "The Truth" really out there?

### THE HURDLE

"You want the truth? You can't HANDLE the truth!" The big question surrounding this game is: "real" any fun?

### THE HIT

Gorgeous engine, called-in support drops/air strikes, shrapnel damage, arc-of-descent ballistics and dead bodies for shields. Eh? Eh?



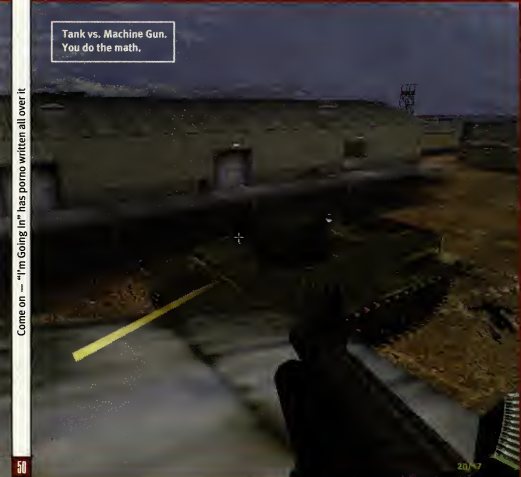
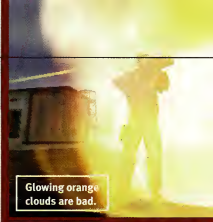
www.eidos.com  
If *Project I.G.I.* were spoofed as a porno film, the title wouldn't have to change at all ...

**PROJECT I.G.I. GALLERY**



Glowing orange clouds are bad.

"Dammit, where is the entrance to this IMAX?"

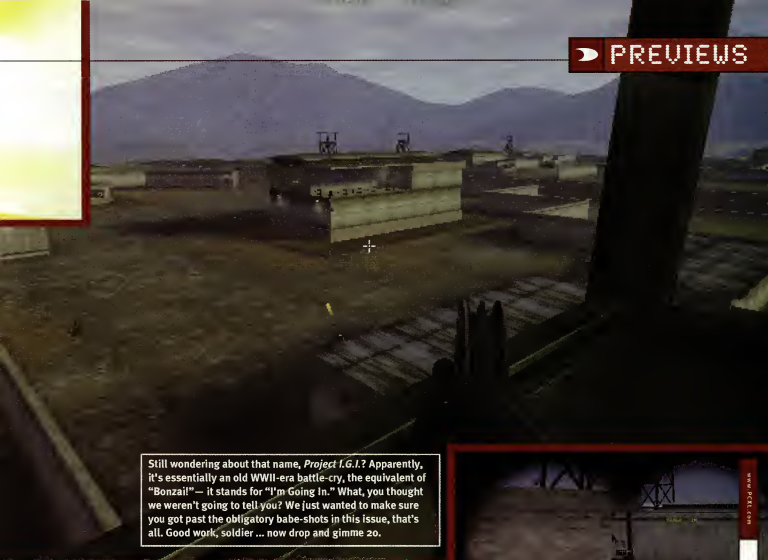


Tank vs. Machine Gun.  
You do the math.



www.031games.com

Come on — "I'm Going In" has porno written all over it



Still wondering about that name, *Project I.G.I.*? Apparently, it's essentially an old WWII-era battle-cry, the equivalent of "Bonzai!" — it stands for "I'm Going In." What, you thought we weren't going to tell you? We just wanted to make sure you got past the obligatory babe-shots in this issue, that's all. Good work, soldier ... now drop and gimme 20.



Binoculars can be used to track down targets and scout for nude Germans.



Loosely translated this sign says something like, "Come here and die American bitches."



Circle-strafing is an essential *Quake* move, but in real life (and *Project I.G.I.*), it just isn't an option.

**P-49** the "son" of the same engine. The game will also feature nasty volumetric fog, arc-of-descent physics on bullets at long range (because gravity is not your friend), and realistic material-density physics (of course those HV

slugs would go through your corrugated-metal barrier). You'll even have the ability to grab a (presumably) unwilling party by the neck and use him/her/it as a meat-shield against incoming fire, an idea so shocking and nasty that it

(a) should repulse all right-thinking people and (b) should have been implemented long ago.

One of the coolest aspects of *Project I.G.I.* is the ability to call on the gods when all else fails. Well, maybe not the gods ... but at least the USAF or the RAF will do in a pinch. You can call in air support via your extremely useful, globally-positioned PDA, using supply-drops (if you're feeling mellow) or full-on air strikes (if you're in the mood to harsh some other poor bastard's mellow). It's not an entirely new idea (the first-person shooter *Nom*, one of the most harshly-reviewed games in this mag, employed the call-in Air Strike concept, just to name one), but by god, in *Project I.G.I.*, it seems right.

*Project I.G.I.*'s current progression could help first-person shooters shake their deserved reputation of lame nonrealism — if the designers don't chicken out. But they've got a long road ahead. Nobody runs as fast backward as they do forward, and "circle-strafing" is largely a tactical wet dream. Still, *Project I.G.I.* is a promising and well-paced title that could do the FPS genre proud. **B**

— CHRIS HUDAK wants *oll you out-of-shope FPS dweebs out there to try running for four minutes at full-bolt speed, carrying multiple weapons, ommo, and ormor. Just try!*

## 5 QUESTIONS

FIVE QUESTIONS WERE ASKED, BUT ONLY FOUR WERE ANSWERED BY ERIC ADAMS PRODUCER AT EIDOS INTERACTIVE. FIND OUT WHY ...

**Q:** What's your pet peeve about FPS games, and (how) was it addressed in *Project I.G.I.*?

**A:** The AI opponents are usually unaware of surrounding events, with unrealistic reactions. Either that, or they're just drunk. In *I.G.I.*, we plan to have multiple AI awareness levels. Elite guards will recognize when they are being shot at, seek cover, return fire, or move to a better fire position. Recruits may just stand stupidly around, while you fire your kill shot at their head. Also, our AI will use field of vision and sound to a great degree. Thus, if you bump a box, a soldier nearby will hear and investigate.

**Q:** What should happen to Chris Carter for that awful "FPS" "X-Files" episode?

**A:** Chris should be digitalized into a "Sim" and offered for download. Then users could download him and place him into a house with no walls, no toilet, and placed near a nuclear waste dump. Oh yeah, almost forgot, I would make him a Virgo.

**Q:** Stare at a blot and tell me the first thing that pops into your mind when I say *Daltona*.

**A:** [No Comment was received on this question — Ed.]

**Q:** What's a critical, obvious area or era the first-person shooter has yet to explore?

**A:** I think cooperative multiplayer campaigns are intriguing. Basically present the single-player campaign with the option to have two to five friends join you. However, this would mean a lot of extra network and AI coding, not to mention balancing. I believe users are interested in man versus machine match-ups.

**Q:** What's your best/worst E3 story you can relate dirty stuff, at least in this magazine?

**A:** At last year's E3 I walked the floor with our booth bartender (Linda O'Neal), a major babe. She was wearing a see-through fishnet blouse. As we walked the floor I told all my drooling colleagues that she was my sister. (Boy were they nice to me!) As I neared the Fox booth, all the *Planet of the Apes* actors (gorillas) stopped their act and surrounded us with lust in their simian eyes. I felt like Hunter protecting Nova! After the walk, she asked me back to her hotel for drinks. Sadly, I declined, because I was having a P.R. dinner with Mike Salmon. In the end, I think I made the right choice!

## ▶ OTHER "PROJECTS"

Everything about *Project I.G.I.* sounds great, but we couldn't help but think about what other games might have happened if the word "Project" were built into the title.



### THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT

**WHAT IT IS** → You run around a forest in first-person mode, avoiding the witch, then push your friends out of the tent to stand guard, i.e. get eaten first. The final goal is to piss in the corner of a basement in an abandoned house without getting killed.

**SAMPLE GAMEPLAY** → Walk a minute. Gathering of Developers is actually making a *Blair Witch* game



### ALAN PARSON PROJECT

**WHAT IT IS** → Hipies sit around, get high, write folk music, and burn incense

**SAMPLE GAMEPLAY** → You have a guitar and a bong. The more bong hits you take, the easier it becomes to play the guitar — but you'll need food to compensate. Get extra points by scoring "hydro," avoiding pigs, and getting out of Betty Ford by age 40



### PROJECT ASS

**WHAT IT IS** → *Ultimo Ass-cension*

**SAMPLE GAMEPLAY** → You see some really cool shit moving at approximately one frame per second, then your computer crashes. This continues until you patch the game. Then you realize that the "really cool shit" isn't actually that cool



### THE PROJECTS

**WHAT IT IS** → The Hood

**SAMPLE GAMEPLAY** → Drink a 40, wear sunglasses, hang with the homies, smoke some crack, play rap music really loudly on a cheap jam box, and dodge a drive-by. It's kinda like giving Salmon a ride home from work

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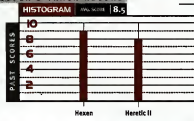
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## DEVELOPER'S TRACK RECORD



# Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force

Yeah, it's another Star Trek game. They promise it won't suck ...

**F**or all the critics who think *Quake III* is nothing more than a technology demo, lambasting its dedication to the dying art of deathmatch, and hoping that somebody — anybody — might beat a decent game out of this old workhorse, you're about to get your wish. *Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force* — the first game to take advantage of the *Quake III* engine, and the first game based on the "Star Trek Voyager" TV series — will be warping in this summer.

As Ensign Alexander (or Alexandria) Munroe, you're second in command of Voyager's elite security force, Hazard Team, led by Security Chief (and Grandmaster of Vulcan Funk) Tuvok. Eyes get-

ting droopy yet? To make it simple for the Trek-impaired, you play a Red Shirt (one of the disposable guys) who'll probably get killed off before the first commercial break unless you're able to phaser deep-fry a Borg noggin or two. And trust us, you'll be seeing a lot of black latex techno-zombies running around and threatening assimilation, since they're one of the main bad dudes making life tough for you in the Delta Quadrant. *Elite Force* has a total of eight missions, each containing 2-5 levels.

While a major part of the game is devoted to infiltrating Borg cubes, a total of 14 aliens (including Klingons) show up to either wreak havoc or play nice with the crew. Since the Borg have this nasty habit of adapting to Federation weapons, rendering them useless, the formerly borgaticious Seven Of Nine has created the Infinity Modulator, a weapon



*Elite Force* has a railgun too, they just call it some geeky Trek-like name.

which automatically cycles frequencies before they get a chance to adapt. There are a total of nine weapons, including the expected phasers, the aforementioned I-Mod, plus some new alien-issued peacemakers unique to the game, such as the Scavenger Gun and Stasis Weapon.

And for The Doctor fans out there (both of you), you'll be glad to know that the entire Voyager crew will be seen at some point in the game, voiced by their respec-

tive actors. If anyone had any doubt about whether the *QIII* engine was up to presenting realistic detail, put those fears to rest now. Character models look exactly like their real life actor counterparts. Tuvok's face is so distinct that I'd almost wondered if Raven had just scanned his picture directly into the game. Think the *QIII* engine has only two color settings (green and brown)? You'll be stunned by the spot-on ship graphics recreating its **P. 57**

## INFO BOX

DEVELOPER → Raven Software  
 PUBLISHER → Activision  
 RELEASE DATE → July 2000  
 API SUPPORT → OpenGL

## INTEREST GAUGE



## THE HYPE

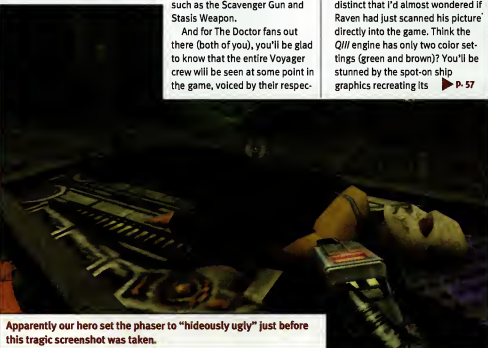
*Quake III* engine = Seven of Nine = Perfect 10. A successful Star Trek shooter (and a decent Star Trek game for once) will kick life into the troubled franchise and let us play with a polygonal Jeri Ryan.

## THE HURDLE

Unreal-based Klingon Honor Guard should have kicked some serious ass. Instead fans kicked it in the ass for extreme blandness. If done wrong, this game could be nothing more than a *Quake III* Total Conversion, and that would suck ass.

## THE HIT

Raven's distinguished history is more than a match for the Star Trek cause — and from what we've seen of *Soldier Of Fortune* they are just getting better. *Elite Force*'s babe appeal won't hurt either.



Apparently our hero set the phaser to "hideously ugly" just before this tragic screenshot was taken.

**ELITE FORCE GALLERY**

Here we present visual proof that the Quake III engine can do colors. The detail and variety in backgrounds is astonishing.



"Pick up, aisle 7!"

Another brave Red Shirt runs happily to his imminent doom.



In *Elite Force* you are accompanied by a team of faceless Red Shirts, and in keeping with the Star Trek universe, not many of them survive.

## 5 QUESTIONS

**BRIAN PELLETIER, WISCONSIN-BASED RAVEN'S ELITE FORCE PROJECT LEAD, WAS STUNNED INTO SUBMISSION LONG ENOUGH FOR HIM TO ASSIMILATE THESE FIVE ASININE QUESTIONS**

**Q:** What restrictions are there working on a Star Trek license game? Does Paramount have to approve every single thing in the game?

**A:** We haven't been given too many restrictions and ... YES, every single aspect of the game needs to get approved (every creature/alien, environment, weapon, likeness of all characters, story, and level outlines). The person we work with at Paramount is a gamer and he understands that the game needs to be fun, so he is pretty flexible with our crazy ideas and helps us work them out so they will fit.

**Q:** Okay, the question that's on every Voyager fan's mind: Janeway's In-game hairstyle — the bun, the flip, or the wave?

**A:** The story line falls into the same timeline of the TV show this season. So we are restricted to using all current information and looks, including hairstyles. So what you see currently on the show is what you get in the game, which is too bad, because the pigtail hairdo we originally modeled her with looked good. Oh well ...

**Q:** Madison, Wisconsin, isn't exactly the center of the gaming universe. Why should it be?

**A:** Because we have a lot of beer and cheese. It's also a beautiful city full of culture and ethnic diversity. *Money* magazine has, on more than one occasion, voted Madison as the best city to live in. Oh, and did I mention we have beer and cheese?

**Q:** Technobabble alert! At any point in the game do you encounter a temporal anomaly, fire a tachyon pulse, or jettison the warp core?

**A:** Let's see, we have Photon torpedoes, Dilithium matrix crystals, Tetrion Pulse Disruptors, an isodimensional rift, and yes, even a warpcore breach. We've got enough technobabble in the game to make even the most diehard Trekker's head spin.

**Q:** What has been the most difficult part about making *Elite Force*?

**A:** The hardest part has been accepting the fact that I actually like the character Neelix from the "Star Trek Voyager" series. Aside from that, we have the pressure of making one of the best Trek games ever, making sure Paramount likes what we're doing, getting the game finished on time, and making sure we don't go insane doing it.



◀ p. 55 bright, antiseptic atmosphere or the dark, eeriness of a Borg cube. And as action also takes place on a Klingon Bird of Prey, a space station, and even inside the Holodeck for multiplayer mayhem, your retinas won't get bored.

Ahh ... the Holodeck. Long the refuge of creatively bankrupt Star Trek scribes, it allows the crew to experience a computer-generated make-believe world. Used for multiplayer deathmatch, team deathmatch, and CTF, the Holodeck is a way of side-stepping Paramount's ongoing policy of not soiling the good Star Trek name by having crew members blasting at each other ... at least not in the "real" world. Raven is even including Q3Radiant, a map editor, so you

"Now is the time in Sprockets where we dance ... Dance, you silly Borgs, Dance!"

can create your own deathmatch scenarios. (Ours will be titled "Run, Neelix, Run!")

Possibly the most exciting behind-the-scenes aspect of *Elite Force* is Raven's new ICARIUS scripting system. While the scripted sequences in *Unreal* and *Half-Life* oohed and ahhed in their day, they were mostly unchangeable set pieces — the player couldn't interact in the action. ICARIUS is more flexible, allowing you to make choices that affect other crewmembers. For example, one sequence has you come upon two team-mates, one badly injured and the other about to get assimilated by a Borg drone. You can either let them fend for themselves (certain death)

or take down the Borg, giving them time to beam out. Not only are these sequences just plain cool, they add much-needed replayability.

If what we've seen so far is any sign of things to come, we are beside ourselves with an inordinate amount of geeky excitement (even for us). The vast majority of Star Trek games since *Judgment Rites* have, to put it bluntly, sucked. By this time next year, that sentence just might change to "since *Elite Force*."

— CHUCK OSBORN *actually admits to watching (and occasionally enjoying) "Star Trek: Voyager"*

## THE DUMMY'S GUIDE TO REVIEWING STAR TREK GAMES

Want to write about Star Trek, but think Spock was a pediatrician and can't tell Captain Kirk from Kirk Cameron? Here's a few creative crutches that the "professionals" use. Learn a few lingo tidbits and turn them into a corny-crap-ola of funny business. First off, you need use puns, and lots of them. (See use of "warping" in first paragraph of this preview.) It has been scientifically proven that Star Trek fans must read a minimum of two to three puns per article or their brains will implode. Which brings us to the next four crucial ingredients to any story that involves anything Trek. Take it from some people who have written much more than their share ...

## ALL STAR TREK FANS ARE GEEKS

Making fun of Trek fans is not only expected, but encouraged. They are different than you and should be mocked. Another true fact: Anyone who has ever watched a full episode is a 35-year old virgin living alone in his parents' garage



## STAR WARS IS ALWAYS BETTER

Remember, Yoda's Desktop Adventures was a technical masterpiece compared to *Star Trek Academy*. Why? Because it had Yoda, of course!



## ALL STAR TREK GAMES SUCK

This includes any you've never played, let alone heard about. Even if this rule is broken, it is instantly reinstated once the next sucky Trek game is released — which always happens



## SEVEN OF NINE IS HOT

If you remember nothing else, throw in a quick Seven reference, modified by "sexy," "sultry," "skilight," "borgalicious," or "mannish." It works for us ... why not you?





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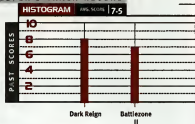
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## DEVELOPER'S TRACK RECORD



# Dark Reign 2

Much more than a sequel

**D**ark Reign didn't exactly have an easy time bidding for attention on store shelves. At the time of its release in the fall of 1997, its 2D graphics were sooooo 1996 when compared to Cavedog's bigger, badder 3D beast *Total Annihilation*. But the remarkable AI and superior depth garnered support from the few who actually played the game. In early 1998, a decision was made to not only follow *Dark Reign* up with a sequel, but to make it fully 3D as well. Thus, *Dark Reign II* was born.

Set in the far future, Earth has become a wasteland, ripped apart by failed terra-forming attempts and controlled by the repressive Jovian Detention Authority (JDA). Meanwhile, outside the domed cities of Earth's most successful inhabitants, huge masses of toxic Sprawlers unite in hopes of leaving the slime pits and moving 'on up

into those dee-lux shiny domes in the sky-high. In response, the JDA declares war on the Sprawlers, yielding 20 missions, playable from both JDA and Sprawler perspective.

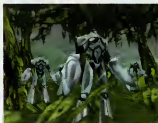
Forget everything you have or haven't heard about the original, *DRII* is almost a completely different game. The entire engine has been trashed and in its place is a brand-spanking new 3D engine with hardware acceleration, fog effects, and enough bells and whistles to choke the most jaded graphic snob. The advantage of this new 3D world is, without a doubt, the new camera angles. Hell, you can go from a traditional "satellite view" camera to a ground-level "troop cam" with one keystroke. Not to mention *DRII* binds camera movement to the mouse-wheel, right mouse button, and "F" keys to keep things simple so you can focus on strategy instead of being a director.

You can also use the new 3D terrain to hide or help fortify your troop's position. Just pan down to the ground level camera to see how each unit fits behind a building, mountain, or pile of rubble. Your troops can now get to higher

ground, increasing their combat potential as their missiles rain down on exposed enemy units. This enhances gameplay and utilizes the 3D world for more than just prettified graphics.

The impressive 3D game engine could even be called "mind-boggling" (if you were a whore to the games industry and the hype associated with it). But wait, there's more hyperbole! Those code-monkeys over at Pandemic Studios have completely redesigned the game-window interface to be more user-friendly, and to better allow multi-tasking from anywhere on the map.

The interface works like this: The bottom menu has a list of your assigned groups (CTRL 1-9) and all



*Dark Reign II* has its share of pretty trees.

your industrial structures, plus the menu can be scrolled up and down to hold dozens of units and buildings in the smallest amount of space. Click on its representative icon and you'll have access to that unit or structure no matter where your camera is located at the moment. These aren't "earth-shattering" or even "mind-boggling" developments, but still, they're smart additions that give *Dark Reign II* a chance of standing out from the crowd.

## OTHER DARK REIGNS

### JAMES BROWN

**POSITION OF POWER** → God-father of Funk  
**RULED** → All things funk-like  
**TERRORIZED** → "His wife... bath... good good... smacked her upside the head"



### RONALD REAGAN

**POSITION OF POWER** → The leader of the free world  
**RULED** → Us  
**TERRORIZED** → Liberals, poor people, common sense, air waves, and monkeys



### ADOLF HITLER

**POSITION OF POWER** → Mein Führer  
**RULED** → Goose-stepping blondes  
**TERRORIZED** → Anyone who wasn't a goose-stepping blonde



### FRESH PRINCE OF BEL AIR

**POSITION OF POWER** → "Fresh" Prince  
**RULED** → A big house in Bel-Air  
**TERRORIZED** → Anyone who watched this crapsstrick TV show



## INFO BOX

**DEVELOPER** → Activision  
**PUBLISHER** → Pandemic Studios  
**RELEASE DATE** → June 2000  
**API SUPPORT** → DirectX9

## INTEREST GAUGE

INTERESTED    EXCITED    ANNOYED

## THE HYPE

Activision's *Dark Reign* was an underrated RTS that developed a small but loyal fanbase. *DRII* will hopefully jumpstart this sleeping franchise.

## THE HURDLE

*Dark Reign*'s fans (both of 'em) — who have been loyal since day one — may be turned off by a sequel that doesn't even resemble the original.

## THE HIT

The 3D RTS was original two years ago when Pandemic Studios went to work on *Dark Reign II*, but the sub-genre is now overpopulated with me-too clones.



The death of Baron Samedl.



5 QUESTIONS

**GREG BORRUD DESIGNS GAMES FOR PANDEMIC STUDIOS. SURE, HE COULDN'T BEEN A PRO BODY BUILDER (BUT WE'D STILL REFUSE TO PUT HIS PICTURE ON THE COVER OF PCKL)**

**Q: What was the biggest challenge in turning a 2D top-down into a 3D multi-camera game?**

**A:** I guess the toughest thing was walking that fine line between taking advantage of everything 3D has to offer and keeping gameplay accessible to traditional RTS gamers.

**Q: Are you referring to complete mupets incapable of manipulating a 3D camera?**

**A:** [Laughs hysterically, because we're funny damnit!] Most strategy gamers don't want to hassle with the rotating and zooming of a camera; they just want to see as much of the battlefield as possible to allow them to truly use their strategies effectively. The benefit of a 3D camera is that it can be adjusted to suit everyone's specific needs.

**Q: What enhancements have been made to DRIF's AI?**

**A:** One of the biggest enhancements has been in the squad-level AI, the way our units communicate with each other and work together intelligently, rather than just running around like a bunch of one-man armies. And, there are a host of configurable AI settings at each player's disposal.

**Q: So you're saying DRIF is more than just another pretty 3D engine with stupid units?**

**A:** I'd say AI is more important in a strategy game than in any other genre. If we made a game that looked beautiful but had stupid units then we would be slaughtered. So we set out in the beginning to create a more powerful AI than we had in the original *Dark Reign*.

**Q: How important is DRIF's multiplayer this time around?**

**A:** Very important. We rewrote all of our networking code to allow many more players into a game at once. We know that a lot of people play RTS games just for the multiplayer and we wanted to make sure we offered a better experience than they had ever had before.

**I don't care how cold it is ... Move out!**

To the right of the on-screen action are several pop-up menus: Troop Behaviors, Troop Orders, Game Menu, Waypoint Menu, Formations, and your standard RTS map. Troop Orders are crucial and needed to succeed in *DRIF*, these consist of your typical Defend, Attack while Moving, Explore, and Stop. Exploring units will head off in an automated quest to reveal every inch of the map. This is perfect in multiplayer when you're too busy trash-talking to manually control your scoots.

Speaking of multiplayer, *DRIF* will have a variety of game types, including Capture the Flag, Blood Bath, Control Freak, and King of the Hill. The most interesting of these types is Control Freak, a game where players will earn points for holding specific points on the map (think *Tribes*). The team is also pumping up the number of players. "Right now we are able to get 16 players playing at one time," claims *DRIF* Director Greg Borrud. "We've also enhanced team play to include a cooperative mode for single-



Bell bottoms make a comeback in the post-apocalyptic future.



**Jabba "The Levitating Pimp" and his ho's.**

player or multiplayer, where players will unite behind a single base and control the same units to fight the enemy."

*Pandemic* is currently squeezing the last drops of cream filling into this bad boy. They're adding fresh new music and sound effects, unlimited production que and unit grouping, dynamic weather effects like rain and

snow, and a complex level editor that will ship with the game. Considering the commercial failure of the first *Dark Reign*, it's surprising that Activision is even making a sequel, but it looks like we'll be glad they did.

— NASH WERNER *thinks Bruce is the funniest member of "The Kids in the Hall"*

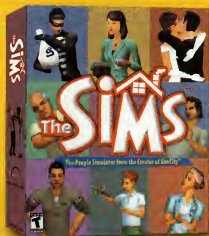


Red Rover, Red Rover, let that big f--- king tank come over!

A secret JDA base ... moronically painted bright yellow.



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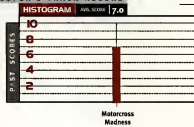
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# Motorcross Madness 2

Tire tracks across your ass and a smile on your face

Once again PCXL beats the increasingly lame "competition" to the punch with this announcement: Games Now Look Like Real Life. Actually, it's not that big of a deal since it's Rainbow Studios that did all the hard work, but we'll take what we can get. And what we've got is their new game, *Motorcross Madness 2*, which rivals ESPN for realistic dust, sweat, and bloody mayhem.

Now, everyone talks about how graphics don't make a great game. Still, if you see a game running on a demo machine no better than what you have at home and it looks like reality, it's going to catch your eye. Well, *Motorcross Madness 2* does more than that... I don't think I've ever said "holy crap" so many times in my life. The killer art and awesome tech combine to make one kick-ass pack-

Is this a motocross game or flight sim? It's your call.



age that designers have filled with 64 tasty races.

You know that this is a motorcycle game, right? Yup, it's a third-person racing and stunt game where you get to do stuff you would never have the sack to do in real life. There are five event types, plus their version of single-player called the Pro Circuit, which ties them all together. Four events return from the original (Baja, Nationals, Stunt Quarry, and Supercross) and are joined by the new kid on the block: The Enduro.

Rather than simulating race-tracks, Enduro puts you out in a living and breathing rural setting and then runs you through the meat grinder. Gates are set up throughout areas filled with cars, trains, airplanes, slick frozen rivers, and buildings. Want to hit that gate down in the mine pit? Well, you'd better time it right or some construction guy is going to be wiping your brains off his winter scraper. How about a run through the winter mountains? Moving chair lifts and buses can throw

your timing off and put your sorry ass in last place.

But what about the events from the first game? Think bigger, better, steeper, and more technical. Supercross and Nationals events require tight skills, the Stunt Quarry requires a strong backbone, and the Baja has a whole new flavor, due to a plethora of vegetation scattered across the landscape. The enormous amount of trees and plants that can be placed on the tracks add considerable challenge to *MM2*, without making the game choke.

A comment should be made about the steps Rainbow Studios has taken to let this game run on a wide variety of platforms. While buffer systems will give you the

## ▶ MM2: THE RPG

Sports games are all well and good, but to really get the respect of cerebral gamers you should be working on a holy-holy-RPG. Rainbow Studios dropped the ball when they went with a sports game... so here is a look at some of the magical items from the could-have-been *MM2* RPG



### HELM OF HONDA

Provides +20 protection against levitating bikes. This is, of course, reduced if the player somehow wanders into the Realm of the Nationals

### RING OF TESTICLE LIQUIFICATION

The victim is raised into the air and then slammed down directly onto his crotch 20 times a minute until either his hit points or sponsors are depleted

### KNEE-TO-DUST DUST

Sprinkle this on the track to cause crippling injuries to your opponents. Can be countered by the hard-to-find Shocks of Might and Magic

### RING OF OPPONENT DESTRUCTION

Slip this baby on and anyone you pass hits the wall. As a crossover, extremely useful in the Tour de France

## INFO BOX

DEVELOPER → Microsoft  
PUBLISHER → Rainbow Studios  
RELEASE DATE → April 2000  
API SUPPORT → D3D

## INTEREST GAUGE



## ▶ THE HYPE

The original game was really quite awesome, so it stands to reason that the sequel will be just as big... right? Our fingers are crossed.

## ▶ THE HURDLE

With four of the events still remaining from the original game, will the addition of only two new ones — Enduro and Pro Circuit — be enough?

## ○ THE HIT

The game will exhibit the same excellent feel of the first title but with a huge improvement in graphics and design... confidence is high.



*Motorcross Madness 2* will feature several bikes from which to choose, including Honda, Suzuki, and Yamaha.

## 5 QUESTIONS

**THE MM2 TEAM HAS BEEN IN CRUNCH MODE FOR MONTHS, SO WE'RE SURPRISED PRODUCER ROBB RINARD WAS STILL ABLE TO TALK AND ANSWER THESE FIVE (WELL, SIX) QUESTIONS.**

**Q:** So it was no big deal to just slap the new Enduro event in, right? Just plug and chug some hills here, some cars there?

**A:** The Enduro is the biggest time-consuming element for the art guys because of the sheer quantity of stuff. In the Enduros, there are about 350 models that get dispersed throughout the worlds. But every model has to be done at a minimum of three levels of detail ... and a lot of it is times four.

**Q:** Since you guys have been digging into the PS2 for your next games, has anything notable popped up?

**A:** The PS2 has to run at 60 frames per second, so the name of the game from a development standpoint is what can you do onscreen in 16 milliseconds, over and over again? You spend 100,000 lines of code, several million dollars, and two years of a bunch of guy's lives for a 16-millisecond timeslice. It's pretty amazing.

**Q:** Third-person camera issues always seem to be a big problem. How did you handle that?

**A:** We fly the camera through whatever. We found that if you're driving along and here comes a barn, and the camera slews out to not go through the barn, it destroys your mental perception of the vector you're on and causes you to wreck and do erratic turns.

**Q:** Is there anything you can do to preserve the player's framerate when they get into off-race areas where they're not supposed to be?

**A:** Not practically, no. We can't analyze where your bottleneck is on your PC with your config. All we can do is put in sliders, and it's a matter of tradeoff between your desire for image quality and your desire to have good framerate.

**Q:** Uh, Robb, this is an interview ya know. I realize you're having fun playing, but come on man, I'm trying to get some answers here!

**A:** Anyway, the 250 has about 30% more horsepower, but the 125 can't accelerate at the same rate as the 250, so at anytime ... ok I'll do this section right this time. Step UP onto there ... nope, we're gonna go back and do this till we get it right ... yeah, so if your 125 can carry enough speed ... right? Jump one, two, and the three and you're out of these bumps...

**Q:** How?



**If this guy is lucky, doctors will be able to sew his balls back on.**

salacious real life graphics, there are enough options for turning off graphic options that MM2 will run lickety-split, even on a PII 233. Don't have a video card? Well, after we're done taunting your granny PC, you'll still be able to play, because *Motocross Madness 2* will have a software mode. Ever heard of Mike Abrash? Well, ever heard of Mike Abrash? Well, ever heard of Mike Abrash? Well, ever heard of the programmers that helped bring true 3D to the FPS masses, and he's responsible for MM2's software renderer.

MM2 features tons of bikes and riders from which to choose. KTM, Honda, Suzuki, and Yamaha are all signed on to be included, but Kawasaki is still playing hard to get. Rainbow Studios is still sending them gameplay videos so they know just exactly what they're missing out on ... that's pretty cool, huh?

They're spending extra time on game physics, so hitting bumps

causes the wheels and suspension of your bike to flex, and your rider moves his body all around to maintain his center of gravity throughout.

There is always doubt whenever someone attempts a sequel to a popular game. You wonder if it will be just more of the same, or, even more criminal, a totally different game that changes what was fun about the original. Thankfully, neither of these two scenar-

ios apply to *Motocross Madness 2*. All the ball-crushing physics and dirt-in-your-teeth excitement of the first game has been pimped out 2000-style and with the addition of the Enduro event, which could have been it's own game, we'll all be buying cups for our googlies this April.

— BRUCE LADEWIG sticks to exer-cycles and leaves the big bikes to reel men



This month we have a very special Drunken Editor's version of Money Shots. We sent Mike Salmon to Gamestock (Microsoft's big event) in search of free love, free beer, and games. He came back from Seattle with these pictures, a serious hangover, and no other memories.

**crimson skies**

PUBLISHER Microsoft DEVELOPER ??



The Flying Dildo model kit was last Christmas's least successful toy.



**mechwarrior 4**

PUBLISHER Microsoft DEVELOPER Microsoft

In the year 2058, OJ's hunt for "the real killers" continues.

"You got Hulk all wrong. Hulk no smash, Hulk want hug!"

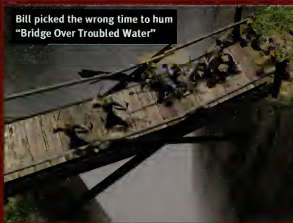
**dungeon siege**

PUBLISHER Microsoft DEVELOPER Gas Powered Games



"Hi, I'm here to audition for the part of the Pierced Nipple Serpent Demon. What do you mean I'm not the right type?"

Bill picked the wrong time to hum "Bridge Over Troubled Water"



Early plotline for *Dungeon Siege*: Enemies destroyed your home and took "liberties" with your chickens

## midtown madness 2

PUBLISHER Microsoft DEVELOPER ???



# MONEY SHOTS



Yo, now take a right and you'll be at the crackhouse, Our Lady Of The Perpetual High, ahh-ight!

## mech commander 2

PUBLISHER Microsoft DEVELOPER Microsoft



"Ha, ha ... you missed m-  
... aww, crap"

The battle Godzilla Versus Mecha-Chicken was less than epic.



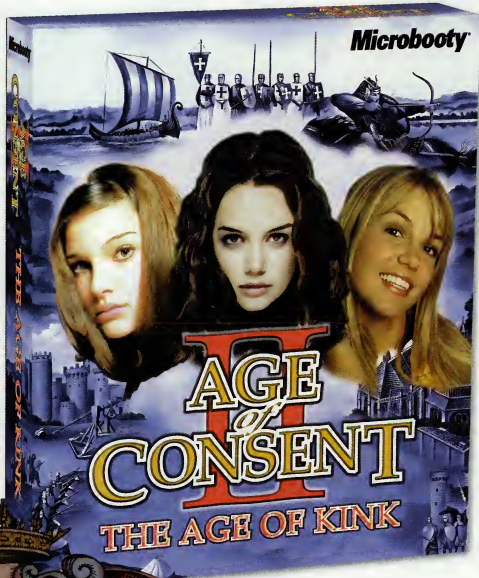
"... and I'll put the Elephant  
Man's bones over there ..."



So sweet ... So innocent ... so close to the legal age of consent

# AGE of CONSENT THE AGE OF KINK

- 17 1/2 years in the making
- Trebuchets that lob teen idol/pop sensations unbelievable distances (and more importantly, the hell away from you)
- Unit upgrades have your barely legal legions maturing in all the right places
- Unmatched multiplayer experience, including three-on-one, co-op, and the user-created MOD Jailbait. Your choice of 13 unique civilizations. Whether you prefer barbarians who expertly handle their massive spears, the fearsome leather-clad Gimp infantry, or purple-headed warriors, there is someone that suits your style of action.
- Experience stimulating action as you push through tight spots that keep your blood pumping until you reach the dramatic climax
- Updated for 2000: Rufies, Backstreet Boys tickets, and trips to Hawaii are now available!



★ "THE BEST-LOOKING GAME ON TWO BREASTS"

— PC ACCELERATOR

★ "THE MOST EXCITING SEQUEL I'VE EVER GOTTEN MY HANDS ON"

— HUGH HEFNER

★ "I THOUGHT I SAW MY WIFE!  
WHAT'S UP WITH THAT?"

— JERRY SEINFELD

In Age Of Consent II: Age of Kink — the sequel to the award-winning Age of Consent I: First Base — you navigate through schoolyards, raves, and college bars in search of tender virgin lands.

Smash the evil Taboos as you plow untainted soil, and glimpse never before seen areas that will expand over time.

But be careful — make the wrong choice and you may end up defending yourself in court against the dreaded "lying little bitch."

**Microbooty™**  
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Go to <http://pcxl.com/gaming411>: Product Number Barely 18

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# Mr. Happy says: "Hey, I'm not picky!"

Chances are, some of you don't get out too much. The unfortunate result of this condition often results in the generally horrifying phenomenon of blind dates. Sometimes, when he/she/it shows up, you discover that no one bothered to mention their actual gender, number of limbs, or species. Most of the time, buying a game is like going out on a blind date. You might get lucky and get a drop-dead knockout, but that happens about as often as a lesbian-free episode of "Xena." More than likely you'll end up with someone that even Bill Clinton would turn down, or, worse, didn't. Fortunately, PCXL is here to help you to avoid the worst of the crap. This month we do our best to separate the queens from the drag queens and the beauties from the booties.



Gaming prostitutes we are not!

## WHAT THE NUMBERS MEAN

- Latitia Costa — The number one baby, perfect. She is part god, part goddess. **10**
- Heather Graham — Baby you drive my car, baby you can be a star. **9**
- Sandra Bullock — Hot, sweet, and quite possibly available. **8**
- Britney Spears — No longer jailbait, but probably surgically enhanced. **7**
- Jennifer Lopez — Good from the front, but a little big in the rear. **6**
- Sharon Stone — Starting to show her age, but still puts on a good show. **5**
- Lorena Bobbitt — She plays with Mr. Happy then lops him off as a trophy. But, she is single. **4**
- Miss Piggy — The wrong species, but she may appeal to certain, uh, "special" people. **3**
- Mimi from "The Drew Carey Show" — A psychotic circus clown who enjoys making you suffer. **2**
- Linda Tripp — Not the wrong sex, but looks like it. She records the date and sells the tape to "Hard Copy." **1**

### KILLER GAME

Any game that receives a 9 or 10 from our rigorous scoring system warrants this nifty logo. If you see the **PC ACCELERATOR** Killer Game Stamp, you know it's a game worth buying. Only the true classics deserve this elite status, so don't expect to see this symbol often.



### SUICIDE

If you're going to create a stamp for this, truly great, then it's only fair to label the unforgeable shit as well. It takes an abominable score of 1 or 2 to qualify for the mouse around the neck. Heed our warning: Stay away from these games at all costs.



### SCREAM DATES

Ever buy a game, bring it home, and then find yourself reviled with it the next morning? Unfortunately, a lot of women are like that too. Luckily, we can help you avoid this situation with games. Who you go out with is your own business (unless she's hot, in which case send us her phone number).

#### WET ATTACK

Publisher → Interactive Strip  
Developer → CDV Software  
Rating → 4

**How bad is the lovin'?** This porn wannabe shows plenty of skin but almost never the parts you want. It's kinda like an old sagging pornstar who won't let you see the naughty bits.

#### INVICTUS: IN THE SHADOW OF OLYMPUS

Publisher → Interplay Entertainment  
Developer → 1q Degrees East  
Rating → 5

**How bad is the lovin'?** Watching Greek heroes in vespenean action doesn't raise our drawbridges.

#### HIDDEN & DANGEROUS: DEVIL'S BRIDGE

Publisher → Talonsoft  
Developer → Illusion Software  
Rating → 4

**How bad is the lovin'?** Hard to get it to do anything right, and when it does, it's slow and not really worth the trouble.

### DREAM DATES

The chances of you going out with a hot supermodel are about as likely as hitting over at a buffet with Rosie O'Donnell. But you can have a hot game. Here we set you up with some sultry gaming hotties. So grab your joystick and heat up the old hard drive — these babes will rock your world.

#### BOARDER ZONE

Publisher → Infogrames  
Developer → Access Software  
Rating → 7

**How good is the lovin'?** Hello god. This is one great looking game, although the controls can be a bit wonky — just like a woman. Should make for an interesting way to warm up a cold winter evening.

#### DEMISE: RISE OF THE KUTAN

Publisher → IPC Software  
Developer → Artix Entertainment  
Rating → 7

**How good is the lovin'?** It's not as pretty as it is fun, but still worth checking out, kinda like your friendly neighborhood prostitute — minus the disfiguring diseases.

#### X BEYOND THE FRONTIER

Publisher → Southpeak Interactive  
Developer → Eidosoft  
Rating → 7

**How good is the lovin'?** Like *Privateer* without crappy acting. Add awesome graphics and complete freedom, and you could be sharing with us from a while.

## ACCELE-RATED >>>

This additional rating provides specific information on how a game performs on a variety of competing 3D chipsets. We test games on up to four major 3D cards and report back with the true test for any 3D accelerator: How it affects the game. We base these ratings on graphic enhancements, framerate, and performance to give you a good idea of how a game will perform on your 3D card. And if the game is not accelerated at all, we fill it with a joke or a bunch of tech-nobabble you probably won't understand. Either way, you should read it.

(Note: Performance may vary depending on the card and the setup of your system)

### ACCELE-RATED

In this little box you'll find out all you need to know about the 3D-ness of the game. We'll talk about different cards, problems, and specifics to help you decide if the game is right for your system. Aren't we nice?

## RATINGS >>>

Our rating scale is a simple 1 to 10 — no decimal points, no obscure percentages. Just a straight score that gets right to the point. Before we score games, they undergo countless hours of testing on different systems, with various 3D cards — our reviewers even play the games under the influence of various narcotics. In the end we stamp a single score on the game, which is essentially a numeric value of the game's worth. We love games and always try to look on the bright side, but when a pile of steaming crap comes in, we won't hold back and allow our readers to waste their money on said crap. You can count on our reviews for honesty, insight, and maybe even a few laughs.

### GRAPHICS

Rendering quality, FPS, and special effects all contribute to an immersive gaming experience.

### SOUND

Visceral sound effects and appropriate music can help make a good game great.

### DEPTH

How often and how long you find yourself playing a game are good indicators of its quality.

### DESIGN

A great game is one that sucks you in and doesn't let go until it is finished. We call that good design.

### PLUSES

Here we list various good points about the game in question — in some cases finding three good points is harder than you'd think.

### MINUSES

Here is where we point out the games flaws — after all, even the best games aren't perfect.

## RATING 5

# X: Beyond the Frontier

▶ ACCELE-RATED

With a good card (like TNT2), lots of RAM, and a large screen, you'll be blown away by the 32-bit color all the way up to 1280x1024 mode. But it still shines even with a Diamond Monster II in 16-bit color at 800x600.

A couple more X's and this game might have had something

It's been years since we had a good trading/combat space simulation (*Privateer 2*). Now, suddenly, several developers are working on new ones simultaneously, and the first has just docked its decidedly non-potomac ass at my desk: *X: Beyond the Frontier*.

The storyline is simple. Yours is Earth's first experimental interstellar ship in 500 years. A malfunction on your initial test mission sends it into an unknown portion of the universe. Broke and unarmed, you arrive in a mining zone of an extremely mercenary spacefaring race called the Teladi. (Think Ferengi in lizard disguises. Why couldn't Egosoft have used some imagination to create a race with a distinctive personality?) They sell you basic shields, place you deep in debt, and advance you 100 credits to purchase goods and start trading.

There are a variety of goods for sale, including giant spaceborne factories that consume raw materials and turn out finished products for general consumption. The economic modeling follows supply and demand in changing prices to



Dodging the wormholes is one of the tests in the tutorial.

compensate for scarcity or market glut. Regrettably, there are no short-term events to send you halfway across the galaxy for the thrill of a financial killing.

*X:BTF*'s graphics are excellent, with enormous planets, race-customized space stations and asteroid-sized factories with colorful corporate logos. The only letdown comes with various race representatives who betray similar artistic origins while employing primitive multiple choice response menus.

Where *X:BTF* surpasses *Privateer 2* (besides state-of-the-art graphics) is in its nonlinear gameplay. *Privateer* pretended to be



The green lights direct you to the entry port (of the ships, perv).

nonlinear, but the game's Rotten Villains became more powerful over time and were likely to track you down. *X:BTF* doesn't offer side missions, but at least it avoids *Privateer*'s cheesy writing and acting.

Apart from the plot, *X:BTF* is utterly open-ended. Do you want to take sides in a war, join the pirates, or become a ruthless bounty hunter? No problem. Unfortunately, as you advance in power and credits, there are no compensatory rewards.

You'll need plenty of credits, because the best weapons are outrageously expensive. Given that much of your life is spent using weak lasers, plasma throwers, and missiles, combat usually means getting in very close and maneuvering quickly.

Damage is a factor of your energy-powered shields: Either

you're intact or you're dead. Unfortunately, there's no multiplayer and *X:BTF*'s pirates have insanely stupid AI.

Finally, a disparaging word has to be cast at the game's perplexing manual, which omits some important facts (such as how to start and transport your own factories). In sharp contrast, the keyboard and joystick controls are intuitive, while the slimmed-down cockpit display (supporting weapons, radar, thrust, and energy readouts) thankfully avoids informational overload.

*X:BTF* still manages to combine an intriguing economic model with spectacular graphics in an open-ended space simulation. Bet you haven't seen that recently.

— BARRY BRENESAL is an alien life farm in search of pizza



Maneuvering into a factory port is much easier than it was in the old days with *Elite*.

GRAPHICS A knockout — lens flaring, colored lighting, shadow effects, star matting, and rotating planets.

SOUND Great voiceovers. New Age soundtrack is appropriate for the atmosphere.

DEPTH Shallow storyline, lack of rewards once you've bought all the ship upgrades.

DESIGN Distinctive. Truly open-ended gameplay and combat only when desired.

PLUSES  
 + Fantastic graphics, good music  
 + Completely nonlinear gameplay  
 + Six races, and 54 enormous quadrants in all

MINUSES  
 - Poor, very short storyline  
 - Lacks high-end rewards  
 - No multiplayer

RATING 7



# Demise: Rise of the Ku'Tan

ACCELE-RATED

Speed isn't an issue with this game, so your hardware is only gonna be pushing gimmicky stuff like fog and colored lights. So move along folks, there's nothing much to see here.

Look pretty? Hardly. Play pretty? Aww yeah...

**G**o on, admit it... you're a slave to eye candy. You've probably taken jabs at *System Shock 2* for its levels, worshipped at the feet of the vacant *Quake 3*, and care more about 3D cards than women (okay, that's going a bit far). But if you're willing to look beyond graphics issues, you just might find a gem like *Demise*.

*Demise's* graphics suffer from extreme sucktitude. They suck and they suck very hard. The models are amateurish, spell effects are primitive, and just about anything you see in the dungeon will make you think it's 1995. But it's okay, because the game itself is pretty damn entertaining.

*Demise* is an RPG that is about two things: Your character and exploration. No *Tomb Raider* genre-bending crossover action game here; battle is turn-based and requires very little action on your part. There's no jumping, and definitely no breasts. You have huge amounts of nicely balanced items and spells at your disposal,

all of which come in handy in the extensive dungeons. There is a "story," in the form of quests upon which you can embark to discover the source of demonic attacks on your world, but it's irrelevant. Artifact Entertainment calls this first-person game a "fun and challenging dungeon hack." Well said.

Because hack you will. These dungeons are huge, and feature just about everything that Artifact could think of to put in them: Graveyards, underwater sections, demonic altars, and so forth. The levels are 3D, but with a weird implementation whereby you move in a tile-based manner. This movement takes you through endless rooms and corridors where you encounter various events (monsters, traps, or level changes). Play long enough and you'll start to survive some of these.

While the dungeon is fully 3D, the town setting where you manage your party consists of 2D pictures of different areas with smaller images on which you can click to switch to such areas as the



Ok, so the invisible monsters in *Demise* do look pretty cool.

store, the city morgue, or the guild. These locales provide a wealth of options for bulking up your party, and as your character level increases, you'll get more and more stuff with which to play. I found the jail entertaining because you can buy monsters as companions — there's nothing like a gang of Floor Slimes at your back to make you feel tough.

Once you get past the laughable graphics, there is plenty of good to be uncovered in *Demise*. There's even co-op multiplayer backed up by a surprisingly large grassroots online community. *Demise* won't make anyone forget about *Diablo II* (or even *Revenant*), but the depth

in gameplay and variety in dungeon-hacking make this the best ugly game we've seen without the name "Sid Meier" on the box.

— BRUCE LADEWIG *ain't* so hot in the graphics department either



Groovy! It's a heavily muscled half-naked disco monster!

**GRAPHICS** That ain't the wind, that's the sound of the graphics blowing in this game.

**SOUND** The quality of voice-work and music alternates between excellent and downright goofy.

**DEPTH** You could explore the dungeons and tinker with options for months. (I wouldn't, but you could.)

**DESIGN** Praise the good Lord, it's an actual RPG and not just *Tomb Raider* with orcs.

## + PLUSES

- + Spells and items out the wazoo
- + You'll see it all in the dungeon
- + It's got maggots
- + Contradictory name

## - MINUSES

- Movement can get choppy
- Levels like *Doom*, but blockier
- Maps can be a bit simplistic

RATING ?

PUBLISHER → Interplay Entertainment  
 REQUIRED → P266, 64MB RAM, 400MB hard drive, 4X CD-ROM

DEVELOPER → 34 Degrees East  
 IDEAL → P11 300, 128MB RAM, 500MB hard drive, low expectations

ACCELE-RATED

Although this game is fully compatible with all Voodoo 2 level boards, the blocky pixelated graphics and lackluster special effects are still nothing to write home about, no matter which card you have.

# Invictus

## You like-ah da strategy game?

Every so often, a game comes along that's so original it blows away every game in its genre. *Invictus* is not that game. It is, however, a unique combination of realtime strategy and roleplaying that manages to be kinda fun.

The storyline is serviceable and accurately reflects the Greek myths upon which it is based. It seems that Poseidon has gotten into a bit of a feud with Athena over the nature of heroism. They've decided to settle their dispute with a contest; Athena will take some poor shlub (that would be you) and turn him into such a hero that he will be able to survive three specific tests launched at him by Poseidon.

You select two of 30 mythological heroes at the beginning of the game and discover the others as you progress through the missions. The heroes include warriors like Hercules and Cadmus, and

long-range fighters like Electra. Around the heroes, the players will equip a party of 10 to 20 units, ranging from common sword fighters to exotic units such as Centaur Archers, Gorgons, and Flying Harpies. Each of these units can become stronger through experience. Once your party is fully equipped, the game is played from an isometric perspective as the player tries to solve a variety of strategic dilemmas.

By and large, the missions are well designed and interesting. One early mission has you defending a group of Gorgons who are being attacked by Raiders. The problem is that both these groups will try to kill you. You have to tightly control your troops as well, because if more than half the Gorgons die, you lose the mission.

RPG aspects come into play as you bulk up your troops and create an experienced war party that can survive later missions. Indeed,



Taking on a squad of Raiders in a burned out village.

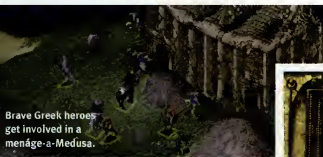
it's entirely possible to win the earlier missions and find later missions impossible because you've lost too many seasoned troopers. The single-player game serves as a training ground for multiplayer arena because war parties can be exported into multiplayer combat. So why isn't *Invictus* better? One word: Voxels. This archaic and

"Isn't it already dead" technology makes everything look pixelly, blurry, and frankly, quite ugly.

*Invictus'* real problem, however, is its style (or lack thereof). The units and heroes have amusing comments, but no personality. The graphics are dull, with listless hero portraits, uninspiring architecture, dull color palettes, and lackluster effects. Considering the rich source material, I expected more.

But, *Invictus* is unique and, in its limited way, fun. It's a stellar idea that suffers from rather pedestrian execution. A little more snap and style in presentation and design, and interplay really would've had something.

— ALLEN RAUSCH has the body of a Greek god — Pan



Brave Greek heroes get involved in a ménage-a-Medusa.



Funny, I don't remember skeletons in Greek history.

**GRAPHICS** Average — blocky, pixelated terrain and generally uninspired graphic effects.

**SOUND** Didn't drop the ball here. It's got humorous dialogue and great voice-acting.

**DEPTH** There are 22 well-designed single-player levels and a solid multiplayer suite.

**DESIGN** A smooth blend of realtime strategy and roleplay make for a fun, if mediocre, experience.

**PLUSES**  
 + Hilarious dialogue  
 + Solid voice acting and pretty decent storyline  
 + Fresh, intriguing, well-executed

**MINUSES**  
 - Never feel attached to soldiers  
 - Clunky and uninspired graphics  
 - Dull units  
 - Voxels

**RATING** 6

PUBLISHER → Hasbro Interactive  
REQUIRED → P166, 32MB RAM, 300MB hard drive, and a healthy amount of patience

DEVELOPER → Cyberlore Studios  
IDEAL → P233, 64MB RAM, and a healthy amount of Black Star beer

# Majesty

▶ ACCELE-RATED

The only thing accelerated in this game is your heart rate when your lazy-ass subjects don't do what you tell them to do. Other than that, this game is quite undeniably 2D. So there.

Dammit! Will someone go waste that #@%ing Minotaur!

The devious game elves at Cyberlore Studios were faced with a problem when they created the fantasy RTS game *Majesty* ... how to make it different from the small horde of competing RTS games on the shelf. Should they allow gamers to build more units? How about if players are forced to mine more than just two resources? Nah, it's all been done. Instead, those insidious little developers did something different ... they gave less control over units. Heck, they practically give players no control at all. Sound maddening? For about the first 30 minutes, it is. Until something odd happens ... it becomes fun.

The basic concept behind *Majesty* is simple enough. Players assume the role of a king seeking

to establish his realm in a land rife with goblins, liche queens, big hairy things with axes, and other sundry Tolkien-esque nasties.

In establishing their kingdom, players build guild halls to develop Warriors, Wizards, and other heroes, as well as markets, guard towers, and the like. Markets are built to generate revenue, while fairgrounds are constructed to train heroes so they can gain experience levels without the risk of combat. The Barbarians, Wizards, Monks, Rangers and many other hero classes all do what the well-established character classes usually do, i.e. hurling magic, slashing with swords, or killing with poisoned arrows.

Though campaigns are laid out by difficulty level (beginner, advanced, expert, hemia-inducing), neophyte majesties must rescue the magic scroll, free the slaves, hold off the goblin hordes ... it's all standard fantasy king-stuff, right?

Wrong! In *Majesty*, one has to cajole heroes into achieving objectives. There's no commanding. There's no clicking on a unit to go kill the rampaging dragon. Seriously ... it's build a Rogue, watch him run away, then pull out your



Rogue's Guild



And then one time at band camp, we kicked that goblin's ass!



Medusa's bad hair day scares the villagers away.

hair. Here you've spent 500 gold to recruit him and he's cavorting all over the screen stealing stuff, sometimes fighting monsters, other times running away if he gets scared. What's a king to do? Offer money, that's what. Too much unexplored space on the map? Plant an explore banner and intrepid heroes will make their way to it in order to earn gold. A Minotaur slaughtering all the peasants? Plant a reward banner on it and the nearest Warriors and Rangers may decide to charge to the rescue ... but sometimes, hilariously, they won't. It may sound like a very limiting play-mechanic, but it's really not.

Since, as in many sims, players don't specifically control the units on screen. Ultimately, one wonders, is this really RTS or a variant of the God-sim genre? And really, who cares? Is it worth the money that could otherwise be spent on beer? Is it fun? The answer is a tentative "yes."

It's not the new genre-redefiner. Wouldn't call this a must-have either, but it is fun. *Majesty* sports a nifty twist on the genre, while still offering the elements that most fantasy RTS fans crave.

— GEORGE STARK could reveal secret information about himself ... but then he'd have to kill you

**GRAPHICS** Like a pepperoni pizza minus the meat ... good enough, but not as good as it could have been.

**SOUND** The blasted Connelly wannabe narrator and joyful Renaissance Faire music will drive you mad.

**DEPTH** Surprisingly deep, despite the lack of control. A little more play and I may require methadone.

**DESIGN** A bold move to think that less control would separate *Majesty* from the seething RTS crowd.

**PLUSES**  
+ Lots of character classes  
+ The God-sim route adds spice  
+ Makes you want to scarf turkey legs and guzzle mead

**MINUSES**  
- The music is too friggin' happy  
- Not enough methods for influencing heroes  
- Needs more campaigns

**RATING** 7

The "meader" they serve at Renaissance Faires is usually just cheap jug wine

# Hidden & Dangerous: Devil's Bridge

**▶ ACCELE-RATED**  
 Hey, can we change this section to "De-accele-rated"? Under Voodoo3, it crapped out completely. With dual Voodoo2's, it performed with graphic glitches and loading was extremely slow. Yuck.

## The Devil's Own Strategy Game

**I**t is the way of mission disks. Their fates are hinged to the games they supplement. The *Hidden & Dangerous* mission disk, *Devil's Bridge*, is no exception. Like its predecessor, it's a potentially decent game ... that doesn't work worth a damn.

This add-on for last year's strategy/action hit (current worldwide sales: 350,000) offers nine commando missions spread over three campaigns — two against Germans in 1944 and one against Communist partisans in 1946 Greece. You pick eight troopers (who all have identical noses) for your campaign pool, assign up to four to a given mission, equip 'em to the nines and send them out into a lavish 3D world.

If you get it to work, you'll have some fun. While nothing I've spotted in this WWII spin on *Rainbow*



**Shit! That damn plane took off without us!**

*Six* gave me quite the joyful jolt of the freight train in *H&D's* debut mission (a classic computer-gaming moment), the better levels thrive on the same combination of rich detail, atmospheric sound effects, and accessible controls.

I wish *Devil's Bridge* had more of *Hidden & Dangerous's* edge and flair for spectacle. Though the first mission is quite good, the second is just a throwaway. It really pops the old suspension-of-disbelief thing when one of my men walks up to the side of a plane and his head disappears into the fuselage. Some of the scripts don't seem to work either. The bomber in the



**Wreaking a little havoc in a commandeered Panther. (It's not aiming at anything — just showing its stuff.)**

first mission took off without us ... and the game went on as though we were on board. The game occasionally got confused over which commando was attached to which hotkey. And, for some strange reason, the developers have buried the order to load the single saved game per mission (a feature I still like) under "Start New Game."

But the most serious problem — the one that killed it for me — was getting into the game and sticking with it once I was there. *Devil's Bridge* apparently doesn't do Voodoo. On the Voodoo 3000-equipped Pentium II 450 on which I'd played *H&D*, it crashed repeatedly at boot.

On a PII 350 system with an Obsidian 2 (dual Voodoo2's on a single card), it loaded, but with graphic glitches in the load meter and occasional shifts to a garish

pink weapons screen. I tried to load up a saved game, watched a happy parade of graphic glitches and waited — I kid you not — almost two minutes for the thing to finish. Shades of *Sim!* I finally got it running without glitches or crashes, albeit still incredibly slowly, after switching over to a TNT card.

But, really ... think about it ... how many people have two gaming rigs — one of which has two 3D video cards? Let the buyer beware, at least until a patch comes along. Depending on your system, the *Bridge* might keep you satisfied until next year's *Hidden & Dangerous II*, but it just might blow up in your face.

— PETER OLAFSON *likes the devils he knows better than the devils he doesn't*



The rest of the team heads down a streambed to a sewer outlet. "Why didn't auto-setup give us nose plugs?" "Shut up and smell the sludge."

<b>GRAPHICS</b>	Generally on a par with <i>H&amp;D</i> , but lacks that game's spectacular "specials."	<b>+ PLUSES</b>	+ It finally ran + It has some good missions + The sound can be cool + Functional terrain graphics
<b>SOUND</b>	Again, almost as rich in context-sensitive sound as <i>H&amp;D</i> , and that's saying something.	<b>- MINUSES</b>	- Crashes - Graphic glitches (though, happily, not in the game proper) - Slow as hell when loading
<b>DEPTH</b>	At its best, it's the equal of <i>H&amp;D</i> , except with opportunities for different tactics.	<b>DESIGN</b>	So-so. The levels were solid, but didn't feel as novel and personal as they did in the first game.

**RATING** 4

PUBLISHER → Interactive Strip

REQUIRED → P-166, 32MB RAM, 510 MB hard drive, DirectX-compatible sound card, a box of tissues

DEVELOPER → CDV Software

IDEAL → P11-400, 950MB hard drive, D3D-compatible 3D card, joystick, a lowered expectation of all things porn

ACCELE-RATED

Since most of *Wet Attack* is a 2D adventure, a 3D card is used only in battles. There are some graphics on par with *Wing Commander II*. Thus, any D3D compatible card is ok, though we crashed with Voodoo3.

# Wet Attack

A game you can play with one hand free

**D**ue to *Wet Attack's* ... ahh ... unique appeal, we've asked two reviewers to cover this game. First, our professional, unbiased reviewer, Chuck, and then with a counterpoint provided by his very biased lower extremity, L'il Chuck ...

**CHUCK** → As porn games go, *Wet Attack* is the *Caligula* of them of all, coming on a groin-blowing six CD-ROMS (two are just for the install) and playing a little like *Debbie Does Privateer*. If, when you hear the word "hardcore," you think of gaming and not sex, then you can skip ahead to the next page. There's nothing for you to see here.

**L'I'L CHUCK** → Oh, shit, that's a **NAKED CHICK** on the load screen! Crap, crap, crap ... this is gonna be cool. That's Lula, the ambassador of the planet Pleasure 6 ... she's like a cross between Jenna Jameson and Wendy Whoppers ... load, damn you, **LOAD!**

**CHUCK** → At its heart, *Wet Attack* is a dismal point-n-click adventure featuring cash-raising side missions interspersed with 3D-ish space combat sequences and, of



A non-porn sequence. OK, the ship may have a breast on it.

course, buxom babes getting binked. Starring as Buck, a neobish cab driver in Mega City, you're contacted by sex goddess Lula to stop the porkulant Pimperator, an evil being intent on destroying all lust by killing our libidos. (Like Roseanne, only funnier.)

**L'I'L CHUCK** → Aw, hell ... my character is a geek. Hey, where are the women? This isn't porn! For the love of God, where's the porn?! **CHUCK** → Graphics and animations are better than you'd have any right to expect, giving low-brow sight gags a Beavis-like charm before losing their novelty. Yes, your spaceship is shaped like a giant mammary and sex slave

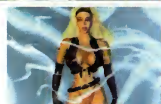


You haven't had sex until you've had rectangle sex.



Well, here we have a giant ... uh ... huh-huh-huuuh ...

robots have "hot rods" that you can pick up and use. Oh, tee hee, how naughty ... (\*yawn\*). **L'I'L CHUCK** → Yes! A police babe is checking me out and she's hot. Wait ... what the hell is this? You only get to have sex by using icons and clicking around her body parts ... and SHE'S FULLY CLOTHED. Even the porno cutscene doesn't show any good stuff. This won't do ... this won't do at all. **CHUCK** → Even if the visuals did turn you on, the horrendous voice acting will turn you off faster than a glimpse of Ernest Borgnine's back hair. Buck's (obviously read) delivery is so gratingly "oh shucks" phony that it was much



Look here. Now look back up again. Repeat.

more deadly to my libido than anything the Pimperator could come up with. As a game, it's a 3. **L'I'L CHUCK** → Lousy sex, no bush, but I did pee nipplepage. Score this one a 5.

— **CHUCK OSBORN** frequently disagrees with **L'I'L Chuck**, but what are ya gonna do? It's got a mind of its own

## THINGS THAT WORK BETTER WET

**AQUAMAN**  
WHEN DRY → Considered a joke by the other super heroes  
WHEN WET → Ricki-Lee King of the Seven Seas ... but still kind of a joke

**SPONGE**  
WHEN DRY → Hard and crusty ... like Strom Thurmond's erection (yuk)  
WHEN WET → Can pick up a spiff, hopefully not Strom's

**T-SHIRT**  
WHEN DRY → Loose and drab  
WHEN WET → Tight and form-fitting, made better with the right filling

**GRAPHICS** Reasonably good 2D graphics, but cutscenes are grainy and the 3D space battles are laughable.

**SOUND** After hearing these voiceovers, I think Van Gogh may have been on to something.

**DEPTH** Intrinsically flimsy premise, but missions and the ability to upgrade helps some.

**DESIGN** If this were a porno, it would be a lush big-budget pre-'80s sex flick masterpiece ... but still a rotten film.

**PLUSES**  
+ Nekkid girls on all fours  
+ Strives for depth  
+ Graphics not bad ... for a porn game, that is

**MINUSES**  
- The voice acting  
- Simplistic gameplay  
- Is to games what missionaries are to the Missionary Position

**RATING** 4

Despite what our special midget issue said, L'I'L Chuck is not a pseudonym for Dan Egger

PUBLISHER → GT Interactive  
 REQUIRED → P100, 16MB RAM, 120MB hard  
 drive, 2MB graphics card, 4X CD-ROM drive

DEVELOPER → Sunflowers  
 IDEAL → P250, 32MB RAM, 8x CD-ROM drive,  
 patience of a saint

### ▶ ACCELE-RATED

3D cards won't get any exercise here. It's strictly 2D, laid out on an isometric grid with black spots behind objects substituting for shadow effects. Another perfectly good waste of your glorious 3D card.

# 1602 A.D.

## Build an empire, fight an interface

**D**espite outward appearances, *1602 A.D.* is an overly complex game of realtime empire micro-management. You start off with one ship and a few supplies, as do your three computerized opponents. Your goal is to successfully colonize a few large islands and develop a self-regulating economy. Monitoring this process takes a great deal of time, because the resource chain of raw materials and finished goods (involving dozens of items, such as wood, tools, clothes, wool, food, and ores) is more complicated in its interrelationships than anything even the *Settlers* series has offered to date.

You also have to contend with your citizens' needs in a timely fashion. Fail, and they won't merely throw time-honored fowl gestures in your direction — they'll stop paying taxes, and that spirals quickly downwards into economic collapse. Trade is essential, because no colony is large or resource-rich enough to produce everything its inhabitants require.

Any game this detailed really needs resource summary screens (such as those in *Imperialism II*) or overlays (like those in *Pharaoh* or *SimCity*) to monitor your society for trouble spots as they arise —

but *1602 A.D.* doesn't provide either. You have to keep an eye on every building and watch for floating question marks that indicate problems brewing beneath those attractively tiled rooftops. You then have to figure out what's wrong with each building and how to repair the problem, even while you're sailing ships into foreign ports, and directing the purchase and sale of specific goods before some other weasel can slip in and cut a deal.

*1602 A.D.* is a surprisingly peaceful game, and the only empire-building RTS I've seen (despite all the marketing hype others use) that genuinely lets you win either through conquest or cooperative trade. But wars can happen, usually from competition for space and supplies. When they do, you must manually direct each of your ground troops and ships in battle. True, the commands are simple: Select from a list of formations (which appear to affect nothing) and click on a targeted enemy. But if you don't personally see to each unit, it will just sit in place and obligingly perish.



There's gold in them thar hills! Floating hammers above the mountains indicate supplies of iron and gold.



You can enclose a thriving young colony with cattle farms — just be careful where you step.

The game offers three speed settings, but when you're juggling trade, war, and the home front, even the slowest setting comes across like the Energizer Bunny on crack. The Pause key brings up an animated port screen, which is my nomination for "Worst Game Idea of 2000" (thus far). Not only does it prevent you from issuing commands to your far-flung empire, but it even stops you from looking

at it. I do like *1602 A.D.*'s retro-*SimCity* as Elizabethan-town look, and would have gladly spent more time studying each building and object up close.

*1602 A.D.* supports up to four players on a network or via the Internet, and two players using a serial connection. That's the ideal way to play it, since without computer-directed AI, everybody has to suffer through the same problems simultaneously.

Despite these quite annoying issues, there's a lot that's good in *1602 A.D.* But alas, colony success is ultimately limited by poor management controls. And don't even think about going to war — unless you're a multitasking automaton, that is.

— BARRY BRENESAL *claims to be an accredited sim-ologist*



Forces destroy an enemy guardpost resembling a 17th century Howard Johnson's.

**GRAPHICS** *SimCity* 1602, with nearly 50 Elizabethan-style buildings. Simple, effective animation.

**SOUND** Good voiceovers. Poorly arranged classical music on the soundtrack gets annoying very quickly.

**DEPTH** Very replayable — seven campaigns, dozens of single-player and multiplayer scenarios.

**DESIGN** Lacks adequate management controls to handle the increasing complexity of growth and trade.

### + PLUSES

- + Good economic model
- + Good game balance
- + Pay pirates to attack opponents
- + Randomized scenarios

### — MINUSES

- Poor speed controls
- No summary screens
- In-game tutorials far too basic

**RATING**

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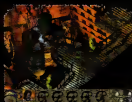


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# ICEWIND DALE

**Spring  
2000**



**Fall  
2000**

# Baldur's Gate II Shadows of Amn

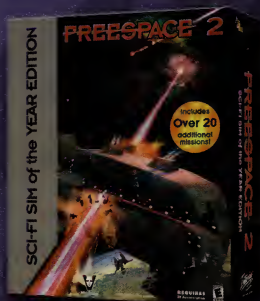
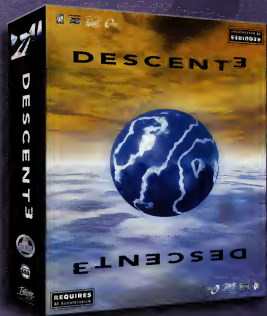


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"★★★★★!" It doesn't get  
much better than this"

- Next Generation



**"(MDK2) May have the single-player experience that'll beat everything else you can do by yourself (yes even that, you pervert)"**

- IGN (PC)



## **"1999 Simulation of the Year"**

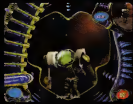
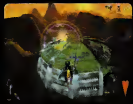
- Computer Gaming World - PC Gamer  
- Computer Games Magazine - GameSpot

**"Destined for greatness"**

- CNET Gamecenter



**Winter 2000**



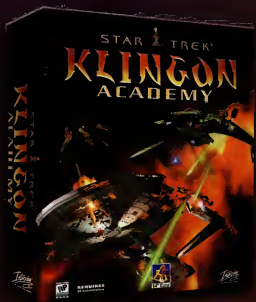


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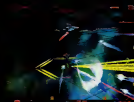
**"...This is easily one of the best games of the year."**

– Next Generation Online



**"...Easily the best looking space combat game we have seen on the PC to date."**

– GameFan Online



# EVOLVA™

Spring  
2000

**"An original twist to the action genre"**

- IGN

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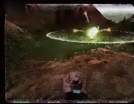
Summer  
2000

**"Star Trek meets Starcraft"**

- PC Gamer

# STARFLEET™ COMMAND™

Winter  
2000





# MESSIAH™



**"... Bob could be the first of third-person heroes or heroines to successfully blend elements of Tomb Raider and Classic first-person games like Quake 2!"**

— Next Generation

**"...Best looking game I've ever seen!"**

— Gamers Press



Winter  
2000

# SACRIFICE™





# What the XFL Should Do

**T**here's a new football league in the works from Vince McMahon (the owner of the WWF, not Chicago Bears' mouthy ex-quarterback) this spring. Sadly, the league will basically have the same rules as the NFL, except with less talented players. The only new angles the XFL is taking will be the nauseating helmet-cam and the expletive-laden players' microphones. That's all well and good, but we think you'll agree that borrowing much more heavily from the success of wrestling to make a league like the PCXFL would be far more enjoyable. Here are few ideas ...



Just before this game Kenny Stabler was caught hiding L'il Snake in Jack Lambert's daughter — now THAT would be some emotion.

## FANTASY SPORTS FRAG

### DENNIS GREEN

**WHY MIKE HATES HIM** → The overweight, drum-playing, player-coddling, time-management sucking moronic head coach of the Vikings managed to convince (or more likely bribe) owner Redneck McCombs to let him be in charge of all personnel decisions. First thing this twit does is draft Daunte Culpepper (who has yet to handle a snap without fumbling it). Next, he passes on Jevon Kearse and drafts Dimitrius "Headcase" Underwood. All right, draft mistakes happen. I can forgive that, but now this freak proclaims that signing a punter is more important

than signing two all-pro offensive linemen, a starting quarterback, or one of the best receivers in football. Denny, you're an idiot!

**HOW MIKE WOULD FRAG HIM** → Unfortunately for Vikings fans, Denny himself is already taking care of that: He has committed to his mistakes by making Daunte Culpepper a starter (behind a devastated offensive line). Once Daunte fumbles it away to the other team, the Vikings defense will come on the field and make any offense in the league look prolific. But hey, don't worry Vikings fans — we've still got the best punter in the NFL. Woo-fricking-hoo.

### GOOD VS. EVIL

**PRO WRESTLING** → Triple H is evil — The Rock is good  
**NFL** → The Raiders (and fans) are evil but the rest of football is supposed to be good  
**IN THE PCXFL** → Forget Eastern Conference vs. Western Conference vs. Western Conference, how 'bout Satan's Minions vs. God's Gladiators in a Super Battle of Good vs. Evil?

### PLOT LINES

**PRO WRESTLING** → Comebacks, revenge, and twists generally better than most movies  
**NFL** → They script the first 15 plays, but don't plan for dramatic moments — In fact, they try to avoid them  
**IN THE PCXFL** → Early in the game a quarterback gets his eyes poked by a defensive lineman, but he comes back just in time to lead his team to victory through the incredible pain

### INTERFERENCE

**PRO WRESTLING** → Some other wrestler mysteriously appears in the audience, armed with a chair or a bag of tacks. He jumps into the ring to swing the momentum  
**NFL** → There is pass interference, but it's really kinda sissy  
**IN THE PCXFL** → Barry Sanders breaks free, runs freely down the sideline and heads for a touchdown. But from out of the stands comes Leon Lett, who bashes Barry in the head with a folding chair — pure chaos erupts!



The People's Asshole.



Triple H — Sweaty and mean.

### PRE-GAME TRASH TALKING

**PRO WRESTLING** → Fights are preceded by comments about other wrestler's weak-ass moves  
**NFL** → Terry Bradshaw and Jimmy Kimmel joke back and forth — but they aren't even NFL players  
**IN THE PCXFL** → Coin toss always turns to mayhem when the punter breaks a bottle over the ref's head

### HALF-NAKED WOMEN

**PRO WRESTLING** → There are half-naked women, although most of them look more like men  
**NFL CHEERLEADERS** → They aren't allowed to play the game  
**IN THE PCXFL** → Cheerleaders are "in-play" and can be used as tackling dummies or interference. Hitting cheerleaders would lead to brawls and vows of revenge



Chyna is a "female" wrestler.

DEVELOPER → Magnetic Fields

PUBLISHER → Electronic Art

REQUIRED → PII 266, 64MB RAM, 20MB hard drive, 4X CD-ROM, 8MB video

IDEAL → PIII 500, 128MB RAM, 650MB hard drive, 32X CD-ROM, 16-MPG video

# Mobil 1 Rally

ACCELE-RATED

Spectacular graphics if your system meets the ideal specs. For those with less, graphical options are highly configurable at the expense of eye candy.

## Racing along the edge of disaster

**T**ired of racing lap after lap on smooth, closed-circuit racing simulations (aka: driving in f—king circles) *Mobil 1 British Rally Championship* delivers a much shapelier challenge if you're ready to accept it.

Of course, my initial reaction to racing pint-sized four-cylinder front drivers across terrain better suited for motocross bikes was less than hopeful, but the intensity of rally racing eliminated any trepidation. Racing through beautifully rendered countryside along varied, undulating, and dangerous terrain in constantly changing weather conditions takes balls that clang.

*Rally Championship* presents a nerve-wracking challenge of racing through unfamiliar (unless you're anal enough to memorize all 420 miles) landscapes. With forward visibility frequently cut short by hills, fog, darkness, snow, trees, boulders, logs, and vicious hairpins, it's essential that you listen to your co-driver as he (or she) bets out pace notes describing detailed track and terrain information just ahead.



The incredible graphics in *Mobil 1 British Rally Championship* even make French cars good.

*Mobil 1 British Rally Championship* is huge, and completing it will consume your life. With six separate rallies, each consisting of six individual stages, a single stage can be as lengthy as 26 miles or as short as two miles. Your goal is to complete each stage as quickly as possible. The team with the lowest time to complete all six rallies is awarded the championship.

Winning the British Rally Championship unlocks the A8 Championship, an exclusive all-wheel drive, four-cylinder turbo-charged class. You can also race in practice mode, allowing you to select any one of the 36 stages, or choose arcade play, which ignores damage and includes a reverse mode. The meat of this title is the Championship. It's up to you to preserve your car's integrity throughout the race. If your car does suffer damage, chill — service areas are located at the end of several stages in each rally, allowing repairs/adjustments to be made within a fixed time period.

Many factors influence your decisions in this game. How long is the next stage? Can my tranny make it to the next service area? Is

there ice (pronounced "ass" by my co-driver)? Why aren't there any naked girls? You can exceed the allotted time — just prepare for a time penalty. I ignored gearbox damage due to the time penalty and paid for it in the next stage when I lost second gear, and soon after, third.

While handling physics are very realistic and unforgiving, damage physics are tuned towards continued gameplay over realistic physics. Repeatedly hitting a tree at 80 mph will not destroy your car as quickly as it should, though car damage is progressive. Off-track forays can cause spoilers to break off and windows to shatter, instantly crumpling your ride into an unrecognizable heap.

Several multiplayer modes are supported, including an asinine turn-based scenario for up to four. (What the hell are you going to do while you wait for three drivers to complete a 20-mile stage?) A two-player split-screen mode occasionally gets the jitters, and unless you have the bandwidth, TCP/IP is a slideshow, with warping effects and intermittent lag.

Multiplayer issues aside, *Rally Championship* delivers spectacular graphics, tons of licensed cars, and unique tracks. This is one of the most intense, exciting, and rewarding racing titles we've seen in quite some time.

— MICHAEL HICKS wishes the British would start speaking "Proper American English"



"Straightnin' the curves, flattnin' the hills ... Someday the mountain might get 'em but the law never will. Yee-haw!"

**GRAPHICS** Ranks as one of the best, if not the best, looking racing sim on the market.

**SOUND** All aspects recreated faithfully, right down to the smallest detail. A3D & EAX support.

**DEPTH** Get comfortable, because winning this game is going to take a very long time.

**DESIGN** There is 420 miles of fantastically rendered British Isle scenery just waiting for an automotive pounding.

### + PLUSES

- + Great sense of speed
- + Force feedback effects
- + An uncompromising racing experience

### - MINUSES

- Questionable damage physics
- Lack of difficulty settings
- Multiplayer is buggy

# RATING 7



**DEVELOPER** → Housamergue  
**PUBLISHER** → Infogrames  
**REQUIRED** → PII 233, 64MB RAM, 8MB 3D card, 350MB hard drive, 4x CD-ROM  
**IDEAL** → 450 MHz, 128MB RAM, 32MB 3D card

# Boarder Zone

▶ **ACCELE-RATED**

Impressive texturing, landscapes, lighting and characters make this a 3D-accelerated feast, but cards like the GeForce that support 24-bit color offer a notable improvement.

It's like snowboarding, but not at all

Every Playstation developer seems intent on releasing yet another, inevitably mediocre snowboarding game, presumably because one of them sold well at some point. So, it was only a matter of time before the PC got hit with the arctic answer to skateboarding. Infogrames has jumped in *Boarder Zone*, a sort of *Trick-style-meets-Cool Boarders*, with licensed decks, funky looking alter-egos, and more sharp 3D accelerated eye candy than a sane body might expect to find from the people who insist on continually inflicting us with *Test Drive* games.

Visually, *Boarder Zone* is damned impressive. Nine different slopes offer an incredibly organic, natural looking surface reminiscent of the beautifully contoured and structured landscapes of *Drokon*. The video options allow players with power machines to pump up the resolution. Color depth, along with a range of special effects in the lighting, shadow, and detail departments, easily makes *Zone* one of the best looking games out there.

It's a shame the game doesn't play quite as smoothly as it looks.

Especially with straight downhill racing, the basic controls are simple, but the bizarre trick scheme leaves a lot to be desired in the intuitive gameplay department. Charging up the trick meter enables you to perform various off-the-wall snowboarding techniques, but the game clouds things up by having three different charge arrows (each for a specific style of trick), and it's very hard to get the hang of doing even basic tricks smoothly.

The game gives boarders the chance to take their shot in four separate events — the Downhill (with three locales that each have three courses), the Pipe, a downhill event focusing on tricks, Big Air, where you have to cross a ravine as artistically as possible, and the Time Attack. You can try your luck in the single event arcade mode, practice, or the Championship, wherein you build up your career by starting at the bottom and working your way up the ranks.

The game also offers the ability for up to eight players to race the Downhill over a network, which adds a lot to the play value, and puts



The best place for heavy construction equipment is always right in the middle of a downhill racing track.

*Boarder Zone* way ahead of its console machine competitors.

All the events share a few common, commendable traits — great looks, fast pacing, and high entertainment value, if a somewhat unrealistic look on the sport itself. Computer competition, however, is tough, cheap, and seldom

messes up, while the courses themselves are littered with obstacles as the difficulty level increases. Also, since this is a winter sport, the courses tend to have a distinctly similar look and feel, although the various weather and time of day options add a great deal of variety.

If the control had been better, *Boarder Zone* would have been far more appealing. Even "as is," for fans of this budding genre, this isn't a bad attempt. It's gorgeous, fast, sharp, and entertaining, in a shallow sort of way. Just don't expect anything more than a tricked-out arcade racer in a snowy setting.

— JASON D'APRILE is so bad at snowboarding that the last time he tried it, people riding by on the lifts were making fun of him



You don't have to worry about those icy patches.



This is probably gonna hurt when she lands...

**GRAPHICS** As good looking as snowboarding on the PC is likely to get for some time.

**SOUND** Decent, if somewhat repetitive tunes, and minimal, effective sound effects.

**DEPTH** The trick system takes a lot of practice, as do trick-based events like the Pipe.

**DESIGN** This game is marred by uneasy controls, and heavily dependent on its looks.

## PLUSES

- + Fantastic graphics and eye candy
- + Seven player LAN support is a welcome option
- + Can import all 25 add-on courses

## MINUSES

- Trick controls are far too complete and hard to get into
- Tracks all feel the same
- Weak commentary

**RATING** 7

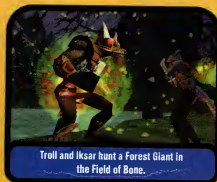
# EVERQUEST

THE  
RUINS OF KUNARK

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online role playing game in existence is about to get another infusion. The *EverQuest* expansion, *Ruins of Kunark*, introduces an entire new player race, a huge new continent, and a plethora of new monsters, dungeons, items, and cities. Along with modifications to the existing engine to allow for even more advancement of current characters, this is one expansion that will inspire an entire new wave of addiction in players. We're literally beating up members of Verant and 989 Studios for an inside peek." — [DallyRadar.com](#)



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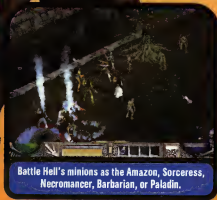
software **etc**

# DIABLO

**Fear, Paranoia & Terror.  
Guarantee Yours Today!**

Machine: PC  
Publisher: Havas/Blizzard  
Genre: RPG/Action  
# of Players: Eight

"The best gets better. **Diablo II** will likely be an early candidate for game of the year ... There are now five classes of player character - amazon, barbarian, necromancer, paladin, and sorceress. Each class offers characters 30 unique skills, arranged in skill trees ... The random level generation that made the original **Diablo** so timeless will remain for **Diablo II**, and with vast improvements ... **Diablo II**, far from being a simple retreat, will open up a whole new world of hellspawn goodness ... Hands down, **Diablo II** is the most eagerly awaited title of the coming year ..." - **DailyRadar.com**



Battle Hell's minions as the Amazon, Sorceress, Necromancer, Barbarian, or Paladin.



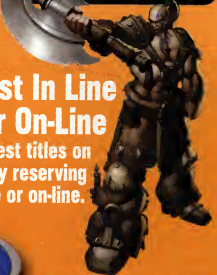
Challenge the ultimate evil over four expansive realms.



Harness the energies of light and darkness with arcane new spells and enchantments.



Real gamers will want to add Unraveler and Barbarian to their collection. Watch for the upcoming release of these action figures plus the **Diablo II** figure when the game hits.



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## HARD NOX LIFE

HOW TO SCHOOL YOUR MATES WITH CLASS

**D**oes Nox multiplayer seem like playing tag in a bus that's rolling down a cliff? We thought so too at first, but after many hours of research and some help from the Nox lords over at Westwood — we've got the goods. Once you get these combos hot-keyed, you'll be slap-pin' around those jumpy Nox — newbie bitches just like they deserve.

### Wizard

If you have a big ole' mellow head and you got the cojones to match, you probably want to pick the Wizard. He's the most difficult to play due to his fragile health and the complex magic system you must learn to navigate. First, you need to set up one to five sets of spells from your spell book.

#### KEY SPELLS:

- ANCHOR** → Make sure your enemy doesn't teleport away. Reverse it to make sure he doesn't teleport you away.
- BLINK** → Teleport to a random location.
- COUNTERSPELL** → All airborne spells are cancelled — Fireball and Magic Missile included.
- DEATH RAY** → Beam that kills unarmored foes (~100 pts of damage).
- DRAIN MANA** → Takes mana from pillars and other players from long range.

- ENERGY BOLT** → Persistent bolt of damage (like Lightning) so long as you don't move or get hit.
- FEAR** → Good for making conjured monsters go away.
- FORCE FIELD** → Absorbs half of all damage, no single hit kills. Always have this running!
- FUMBLE** → Having trouble with Warriors? Make 'em drop all their stuff!

- INVERSION** → Spells that are targeted on you will go back at the caster. You must cast this after the enemy's spell is cast.
- INVISIBILITY** → Duh. Use it all the time!
- INVULNERABILITY** → When you need to cover your ass for a few moments, use this.
- LESSER HEAL** → The only healing spell for Wizards, it takes about six castings to get to full.
- LIGHTNING** → A good mainstay. Lots of damage, multiple targets, and extra damage to armored Warriors.



You invoke the Missiles of Magic spell. You invoke the Missiles of Magic spell. You invoke the Missiles of Magic spell.

When going toe-to-toe, tons of Magic Missiles will make 'im dance.

- MAGIC MISSILE** → Costs little and you can cast it while running. Good to keep in an offensive key set.
- OBLITERATION** → Massive damage spell to everything around you. Very slow to cast!
- REFLECTIVE SHIELD** → This will reflect missiles away from you. You can still cast defensive spells while it's active, so don't forget Drain Mana and Lesser Heal.
- WALL** → Good for holding teams of warriors at bay.

#### Interesting Traps:

For all traps, it's far more effective to place a Marker on the trap and then cast Teleport to Marker on your victim. Sayonara!

- ACED IN THE HOLE** → Anchor, Wall, Obliteration. Place it in a corner or small room so the wall blocks the exit. (The Anchor part is really unnecessary if you're playing against Warriors who can't teleport or if you're playing against magic casters who are too silly not to have Blink available.)
- INFERNO TRAP** → Ring of Fire, Fireball, and Magic Missile. This works really well if you place the trap in a room full of TNT barrels.
- DEAD MAN WALKING** → Obliteration, Confuse, Slow. Almost as effective as having Wall in the spell, but with less casting cost.

#### Teleport to a marker:

As a Wizard, put teleport markers in evil spots. Cast Invulnerability on yourself, walk into the lava and put down a Teleport Marker. This costs little mana and you can kill a lot more people by sending them into lava or onto a bed of spikes.

#### Basic Combat:

Cast Haste when you need a speed boost to get out of jam, but don't want to leave the area with blink. Use all four teleport points.

Place traps on three of them and have one next to goodies like the Wand of Death so you can quickly retrieve them when you get killed. Markers expire after three uses, so drop a fresh one with each visit.

Switch play styles as your enemies adapt. If they expect you to teleport them to traps, stop it. Use the brute force of Force Field, Invulnerability, and Energy Bolt.

Don't walk. Blink everywhere. Always be invisible. Use Shock and Lightning against Warriors wearing lots of armor.

#### Defenses:

As a Wizard, have Magic Missiles ready to kill Conj bombers. Also, you can cast detonate seen traps to clear a room of Wiz traps. Keep your force field up all the time. An invisible Wizard with Force Field and a Wand of Death is the deadliest thing in the game.



Reflect spells and Drain Mana until he's run dry, then take him out.










Look ma – no hands! Two Ghosts to Stun, one Ember Demon to kill.




## Conjurer

The Conjurer is the CIA of Nox. They stay out of engagements unless they're forced to pull the trigger themselves. Their ability to summon and enchant creatures allows them to kill from all over the map.

### KEY SPELLS:

-  **BLINK** → The get-you-ass-out-of-there button. Always have it ready.
-  **COUNTERSPELL** → All airborne spells around you are nullified.

-  **FIST OF VENGEANCE** → Deadly when combined with Stun.
-  **FORCE OF NATURE** - Shoots an extremely deadly ball of energy that bounces off walls.
-  **INVERSION** → Spells targeting you get their scripts flipped.
-  **PIXIE SWARM** → They follow you until an enemy is near, then fly off to do a bit of damage. They're cheap and easy.
-  **POISON** → The gift that keeps a chance, Poison enemies. Slow death is still a point for you.

-  **STUN** → Knock your enemy for a loop. Then, give him one in the groceries.
-  **TOXIC CLOUD** → Poisons them, and does tons of damage so long as they stand in it. Pop 'em with a stun or slow first...
-  **VAMPIRISM** → When you deal damage, you get health back.

### Bomber Traps:

- TAP THE NOGGIN** → Slow or Stun, then fist of vengeance.
- PARTY TIME** → Poison Gas, Pixie Swarm, Stun or Slow.
- SPRING CLEANING** → Force of Nature Stun. (Use in maps with small rooms and halls.)

Put poison in traps just for kicks – it doesn't cost you much mana.

### Defenses:

Keep Blink handy (Have it in the same position on every spell set) so you can leave quickly when you're about to die.

Reverse directions on successive Blinks to thwart enemies following you in your teleport wake.

When you're playing CTF, drop a Golem in Guard mode next to the flag or a choke point and load it up with enchantments. Keep an eye

on its health and rejuvenate it with Greater Heal.




Attempt to keep a swarm of Pixies going at all times. They're excellent protection against enemy Bombers and they're an early warning device when enemies are near. If there are Wizards in the game, keep Infravision on.



Mr. Mechanical Golem makes mush of many Mages

## Warrior

He's a simple but effective meat-grinder. He can't cast spells, but his skills make spells unnecessary.

-  **BERSERKER CHARGE** → Chase your enemy normally until you have him boxed in a corner, then make your charge.
-  **WAR CRY** → Learn to hit this by reflex when you're beginning combat, so you won't be pestered by nasty spells later.
-  **HARPOON** → If you 'poon them, they will come. Bring 'em in and take 'em out.

Remember that War Cry counters spells, including traps that you have been teleported onto. Keep Eye of the Wolf going at all times if there are Wizards in the game. They are usually invisible and lurking. You can snipe by reeling a victim to a window with the Harpoon and beating them senseless with the Hammer.

The Great Sword is the most versatile weapon. It packs almost as



Always gather items before charging into close encounters.

much wallp as the Hammer and will block incoming spells when you stand still and face them like a man. As a Warrior, hit Tread Lightly before you are teleported to a trap. You won't set it off if you land on it. Also, War Cry will stun bombers. Also, if Obliteration is about to go off, Berserker charge out of range.

The more you get a feel for the balance of the classes and the weapons available to them, the more you'll find yourself settling into strategies that suit your style of play. Remember, no matter how you are killed, there is a counter to it. Fight on! ➔



Watch the walls or you'll have a Berserker Charge hangover.



# PCXL Fight Night

## THE SIMS VS. FRIENDS

**T**he moment it hit the shelves, *The Sims* came out swinging and has been conquering the sales charts with astounding success ever since.

On the same ticket, hit TV show "Friends" has done nothing but bust guts and force screams of laughter out of its viewers, season after season. You've played the game, you've watched the show — now it's time to count the blows as these two heavyweights go toe to toe in this, your deathmatch arena of games and glory.

### ROUND 1 Graphics

**THE SIMS** → *The Sims* knows its stuff, giving a gods-eye view of its little sims' house, delivering attention to details like furniture, food, and interior decor. The crowd loves the showy display, but not being able to see the little boys and girls get it on (or even get nekkid) is a tease no one likes.

**FRIENDS** → There are more tits on display here than there are in English Parliament. Courtney Cox, Jennifer Aniston, and Lisa Kudrow all tantalize with outfits that show off their various talents. Thousands of televisions get tongue-baths whenever this program is on.

**IN THE CORNERS** → It's a well-established rule that you need skin to win, and both sides strut their stuff. Although we don't get money shots from either, *Friends*' skins never gets pixelly.

**EDGE** → "Friends"



### ROUND 2 Music

**THE SIMS** → It's got lightweight tunes that smooth out the essentially micromanagement-oriented play. Hits like "Buy a Toilet" and "Play Classical" are great, and if you don't like it — it'll play MP3s files right off the hard drive.

**FRIENDS** → One thing is dead certain, "I'll Be There For You" is a tooth-shattering nerve wrecker. The four claps after each verse are

recorded from ritual fraternity ass-slappings, with the following screams of pain and humiliation edited out. This music is true subliminal evil at its very finest.

**IN THE CORNERS** → *The Sims* soothing music makes work seem like fun and that's always going to bring smiles to the crowd. The "Friends" theme, originally invented by Dr. Mengele to "subdue" crowds, needs to be indicted as a crime against humanity.

**EDGE** → *The Sims*

### GRAPHICS



### SKINS WE WANT

We'd make these skins ourselves if we weren't so damn busy making this magazine. So now we must ask you, our devoted, ill-fated readers to help us out. There are four skins that would be instant classics on any *Quake III* server. Make these for us and your name will be legend. Maybe we'll give you a copy of *Recall* too.

#### GARY COLEMAN

**WHY HIM** → Damn if little people ain't funny! As soon as the miniature comedian appeared on a server there would be riotous laughter.  
**VOICE TAUNT** → "Watchyou talkin' 'bout, Willis"

#### REGIS PHILBIN

**WHY HIM** → Who doesn't want a chance to shove a rocket down his throat?  
**VOICE TAUNT** → "Is that your final rocket?"

#### SHAGGY

**WHY HIM** → He is the ultimate slacker, and proper animation of his walk would be hilarious.  
**VOICE TAUNT** → "Zolinks!"

#### CHRISTOPHER REEVES

**WHY HIM** → Hell, they've already got him walking around in commercials. Putting him in a game wouldn't be that bad — would it? (Ok, maybe it would)  
**VOICE TAUNT** → "I feel nothing"

## ROUND 3

## Dialog

**THE SIMS** → Wendevia peepoo tok ind sims ids hound slike gobbledeegook beakaws ovit, fechtily.

**FRIENDS** → Despite it's re-novated "Three's Company" formula, we keep coming back for more of Phoebe's airhead observations, Chandler's antsy neurosis, and ... lookit all those fine juggs!

**IN THE CORNERS** → *The Sims*' goofy babblings kept the crowd rolling, but eyes were riveted to the necklines of the "Friends."

**EDGE** → "Friends"

## ROUND 4

## Relationships

**THE SIMS** → Kissing and hugging is ok, screwing is not. Bigamy and juggling is ok, same sex marriage is not. Getting naked with others is ok, nudity is pixellated. It's a perfect trainer for Heaven's Gate cultists.

**FRIENDS** → Prime directive of "Friends" — do your own thing until your friends say to stop, then immediately stop or face exile. Exception: You may continue exercising free will for a short time, so long as it is funny.

**IN THE CORNERS** → Lessons learned: *The Sims* — don't let your wives discover each other, don't flirt with children, and if you want to get laid, don't do it "virtually." "Friends" — you too can be a neurotic basket case!

**EDGE** → No clear winner.

## THE Winner is:

Duh. Take a look at the picture below. Who cares about music and relationships? The real life babes of "Friends" kick the Sims' pixilicious asses any day. Tune in next month when "Sex in the City" takes on *Sim City*.

## DIALOG



When you look this good, does anyone really care what you have to say?

## THE WINNER



Jennifer's got that weird David Bowie-green/blue eye thing going on. Oh well, everyone knows she's still the hottest of the three.

## ONLINE NUISANCE

There comes a time when you become so good at a game that slaughtering your opponents is no longer satisfying. At times like this, the only option you have is to be really damn annoying.

## THE BLEEDING HEART — STARCRAFT

**WHAT IT IS** → Before the game starts, make sure you tell everyone you're new at the game and to take it easy on you. Make sure you

remember the name of the player that demonstrates the most sympathy. When you go into the game, put your base into the most remote corner you can locate, then build a rush force while scouting for the other players. Once you've found at least two others (including the helpful person from the pre-game chat), get your mobile base and a couple SCVs and send them to the friendly person's town. Give him a sob story of how the other player attacked you right off and destroyed everything else. With luck, he'll attack the other player when you tell him where he is. When they start fighting, break your rush force into two groups and take out both of their cities while their armies slaughter each other.

**WHY IT'S ANNOYING** → People hate to be made into fools and to lose games — you've just done both.



## THE IN-GAME STALKER — EVERQUEST

**WHAT IT IS** → Pick the most attractive female skin you can locate. Then find some male player that takes an interest in your character (it will happen — EQ players are really sad). Immediately shout your eternal devotion to this character and swear that you'll never leave his side. From this point on, every time you log into the game, immediately shout his name in every zone. Beg him to come back to you, while saying you're sorry. When you do find him, start screaming at him for leaving you for another woman and threaten to kill him. You can also bug him to give you gifts. Keep whining and following him until he gives you something.

**WHY IT'S ANNOYING** → Eventually he'll either stop using that character or move to another server. If you're really lucky, the other players will get so sick of your antics that they'll get mad at the guy you're stalking, thus making his sad existence that much more painful.

## THE HUMAN SHIELD — UNREAL TOURNAMENT

**WHAT IT IS** → When you see someone winning, get fully armored and healed up and follow him. Every time he starts shooting, jump in his line of fire to absorb the damage. You should have a macro set up to a key that says "I won't let you die, take me instead!" After taking a few hits, get out of the way before he can finish you off. By this time the other guy he was chasing has either gotten away or has turned around and is going to kill the guy you're blocking. Whichever happens, your mission is accomplished.

**WHY IT'S ANNOYING** → Showing complete disregard for winning really pisses off people who have hissy fits if they don't win.

## THE MILITARY EXPERT — ROGUE SPEAR

**WHAT IT IS** → As soon as you start shooting people, immediately spout off about how the weapons effects are wrong. Talk about the size of the exit wounds, powder burns on close-range shots, blood spray patterns, weapon range, and accuracy. Eventually everyone will be so sick of you that they'll try to kill you. When they start nailing you, shout things like "You see?" and "That's exactly what I meant!"

**WHY IT'S ANNOYING** → Eventually they'll either completely ignore you or leave the game, because no one likes a whining know-it-all.

# Local Man Doesn't Want To Be A Millionaire

## "I'M GOOD, THANKS." SAYS NON-MILLIONAIRE

**T**hough most of the country (including videogame buyers apparently) is in a state of millionaire fever, after extensive research, PCXL recently discovered a man whose answer to "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?" is simply, "Not me."



Greg Mott is currently listed as #158,673,054 on the *Forbes*'s list of richest Americans.

A self-described 25 thousand-aire, Greg Mott refuses to give up his non-millionaire lifestyle, even though most of his friends, family, and business associates dream of one day becoming millionaires. "It really doesn't interest me that much," says Mott, "To be honest, I don't think about it."

Mott realized he was different when his sister-in-law gave him the *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire*? CD-ROM game for his birthday. "What's this?" he asked. Incredulous, she had to explain to Mott that the game is based on a TV game show starring Regis Philbin in which contestants can win a million dollars by answering trivia questions. "Huh. Well, how 'bout that," he responded.

As news spread of Mott's reluctance to become a millionaire, his loved ones worry that his non-millionaire leanings will make it difficult for him later in life. "He might not want to be a millionaire now, but we're hoping it's just a phase," says Jim Mott, Greg's brother. "Our parents are kind of



Reege's final answer to Greg Mott: "You're an idiot."

in shock right now, but we all still love him."

While Mott is currently resistant to becoming a millionaire, he admits that he is not necessarily opposed to marrying a millionaire, but only if it means not having to go on a TV show to do it. Ideally, he'd like the millionaire to be female, breathing, and without a track record of brutalizing his/hers spouse, too.

### THE POWER METER

Note to PR Babes: Ass-kissing can move your company up the scale for one month and one month only. More than ass-kissing = more than a month. Nudge-nudge, know what I mean, honey?

THIS MONTH'S ROSTER

1 1

**MICROSOFT** → MS has hits lined up like editors at a free lunch. Though some might be pushed to late 2000, the line-up is dominating.

2 4

**ACTIVISION** → *Elite Force* may be the first decent Star Trek game in ages. Plus there's *Soldier of Fortune*, *Vampire*, and *Wolfenstein 3D*.

3 8

**HASBRO** → With huge mass market sales, the question is, will *RollerCoaster Tycoon* ever crash?

4 2

**MAXIS** → With massive sales of *The Sims* and *Sim City 3000*, there's no doubt about it: Maxis is back.

5 10

**EIDOS** → Getting closer to realizing the potential of *Ion Storm*, Eidos has winners lined up for 2000 — then again, we said that in 1999.

6 3

**BLIZZARD** → Release the 1—king game already! We sincerely believe that a family of monkeys on typewriters could have come up with *Dobbo*! by now.

7 9

**SIERRA** → Every month brings *Tf2* closer and moves Sierra up the ladder. (The giant tin of popcorn they sent us for Christmas didn't hurt either. We're still picking the kernels out of our teeth.) You can also expect *Half-Life 2* announcements soon.

8 -

**WESTWOOD** → C&C *Firestorm*, *Nax*, and C&C *Renegade* are upping the potential for the fallen ruler of the RTS market.

9 7

**RED STORM** → *Urban Operations* should keep *Rogue Spear* alive, but beyond *Rainbow Six*, Red Storm has shown us little.

10 -

**THE FRENCH** → They would've gotten the ninth spot but they surrendered. Stop buying U.S. companies or Jerry Lewis becomes a permanent guest!

HONORABLE MENTION

**GT INTERACTIVE** → GT killed *Codevot* but still has Duke *Nikem* and *Ilver* in for the long term. Too bad the short term doesn't look so hot.

**ACCLAIM** → For the love of all things holy, please stop with the *South Park* games. We've found nutty chunks in our stool more entertaining than these half-assed attempts at games.

## FANTASY FRAG

### REGIS PHILBIN

**WHY HE SHOULD BE FRAGGED** → Well, Kathy "Cody took a really cute shit today" Lee has announced she's dumping him, so it looks like poor Reege's only gig will soon be "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?" — the most successful game show in TV history. Even though only a handful of people have actually won the million, the result has been a slew of garbage TV shows. "Greed," "Quiz Show," "Who Wants to Marry a Millionaire," etc., have burst from network bellies like alien face-huggers. Every wannabe Cliff Clavin has had his shot and now that the applicant pool has reached the shallow end, only morons so dumb that they'll use all three lifelines on the *500* question and still miss it are left to tread water.

**HOW HE SHOULD BE FRAGGED** → Forced into a life or death situation where he believes picking one door will free him and the other means certain death (or another two years co-hosting with Kathy Lee — basically the same thing), we wait for his "final answer." Only we let the *Quake Marine* blow his ass away no matter which door he chooses. Unfortunately for Reege, the *Quake Marine* is a "no-life line."

Every so often on our website, we frag whatever the heck makes us angry, and occasionally we frag something just because it nuds it. Find out what we fragged recently on [www.pcxl.com](http://www.pcxl.com). You'll come for the frags, but you'll stay for the CRAZY NEWS, AND THE BABES.







## NEWS BRIEFS

**E3 2K Bigger Than Ever: Prostitute Shortage Feared**

It has been announced that this year's E3 (Electronic Entertainment Expo), was not only sold out in record time, but will be the largest such event to date. As a result, the LAPA (Los Angeles Pimp Association) is concerned that their current supply of ho's may not be large enough to fulfill demand. There are also worries that there may be significant drug shortages as well. One local peddler summed up the situation, saying, "Normally we've got enough crack, smack, and back to go around, but there's just too damn many horny honkies this time!" However, organizers are hoping to offset these shortages by supplying massive quantities of alcohol and booth babes — a lesser quality but satisfying substitute.

**Bill Gates Launches Blitzkrieg At March GDC**

At GDC (Game Developer's Conference) this past March, Bill Gates officially announced the "X-Box" to demonstrate "Microsoft's ongoing commitment to the entertainment market." Attendees report that Mr. Gates did appear, but instead announced that he "reviewed and improved" the design of the PS2 for his new system — noting that it's not stealing "unless I'm caught. And besides it worked great with Apple." He also added that the competing consoles were "outdated technology which should be buried like a steaming heap of dog crap." The system is said to initially be free with the purchase of Windows 2000 and should put all other competition out of business — but it isn't a monopoly.

**THQ Loves Large, Muscular Men in Tights — not that there is anything wrong with that**

A guy sniffing your sack isn't gay, is it?

Thanks in part to lots of large men wearing spandex shorts while exerting themselves, THQ has announced record fourth quarter earnings. Their license and relationship with the WWF has paid off big with *WWF WrestleMania 2000*. Seeking to discover how deep and meaningful this relationship is, PCXL decided to probe repeatedly and deeply into some of the more sensitive areas at THQ. Not only are they planning another WWF game, but a few anonymous sources described some admiration for the sweaty behemoths. "I love it when Mister Socko goes right down the throat, harder and harder and harder! Faster and faster until he explodes with power!" Also overheard: "The Rock really lives up to his name!" With a relationship like this, you can be sure that THQ will never leave the WWF behind.

**Related?**

While looking through newspapers, the PCXL staff noticed interesting coincidences between these events and our co-workers...

**Estrogen not effective treatment for Alzheimer's**

— Chuck Osborn's breasts noticeably larger; he still forgets things

**Fox cons "Who Wants to Marry a Multimillionaire"**

— Matt Holmes has stopped dressing like a woman

**U.S. agents bust Ecstasy ring**

— Mike Salmon ecstatic over large busts

# Satan Speaks Out on Violence

**MESSAGE TO LEGISLATORS:  
"GET THE HELL OFF MY BACK!"**

**A** defensive, yet undeniably evil, Lord Of Darkness took to Capitol Hill last week to preserve his bad name in the wake of unsubstantiated charges that he is responsible for the influx of violence in video games. Smelling of brimstone, the deep crimson Satan, (a.k.a. "Beelzebub"), spoke in front of a Senate committee to defend his record on the "whoop-assing of America."

Getting off to a polite start by temporarily rescinding his policy of "damning and ripping flesh from the bones of all mortals" in his presence, Satan was accompanied only by his lawyer, Mr. Roy Cohn (deceased) and live-in girlfriend, Tanya.

"Hey Teddy ... Jesse ... good to see you again," said a surprisingly upbeat Prince Of Evil as he waived to Senators Ted Kennedy and Jesse Helms, who squirmed uncomfortably in their seats. But, as questioning into Satan's role in the video game industry began, the mood of the proceedings became much darker, aggravated by Satan's constant habit of disintegrating visiting members of the public as he spoke.

"Listen, fools! If I made video games, you'd know it!" Satan insisted. While he stated that he admires the work of many game

developers, most notably Head Games and "anybody that releases buggy crap, generally causing misery and distress," Satan refuted any responsibility for violent video games. Admits The Beast: "Look, if I made a video game, it would be the one you would least expect. Maybe something cute and innocent, that would slowly suck out your soul. In fact, maybe I've already made it and haven't told you."

Satan went on to comment: "BWA-HAHAHAHAHA! Strom Thurmond, you will now dance for my amusement!"

Experts agree that the likelihood of Satan's involvement in the gaming industry is slim, as earlier reports of his influence in rock music and the careers of David Spade and Jerry Springer are still unproven. While games like *Doom* and *Diablo* are said to glorify Satan, he points out that he's always portrayed as a victim, getting shot at or destroyed. Why, he wonders, would he want to put out games that show him as a wimp?

"And then there was that game *Hell*. Did you ever play that crap? Seriously — Dennis Hopper? If I made a video game, I'd at least get Tom Cruise or Leonardo DiCaprio." Laughing and twitching his nose mischievously, Satan added, "Or would I?"

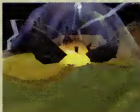


...that Satan really knows how to clear a room.

## GameScan

GAMING BOOT CAMP

We at PCXL have recently discovered that some of our readers are in the military (or at least part of a militant group of some kind). So, we asked a real drill sergeant what he thought of some upcoming games.



### RESURRECTION

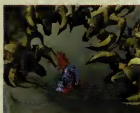
Developer → Mind Control

Publisher → TBA

Release Date → Not available

**Game Info** → *Resurrection* boasts simple controls and complex strategy. You choose a leader, then head to the 3D battlefield, strategically building outposts that can be upgraded into fortresses.

**Sarge Sez** → "A weak mind is useless! It's like giving your enemy a bayonet, kicking it up your ass, and pleading, 'Kick this as hard as you can, Sir!'"



### EVOLVA

Developer → Computer Artworks

Publisher → Interplay

Release Date → Early 2000

**Game Info** → Far in the future, after developing genetic engineering into an art form, humanity is challenged by an interplanetary parasite that consumes and transforms entire worlds. In this shooter, you lead a team of soldiers that have the ability to absorb their enemies and gain their abilities. After facing down the parasite and its legions you battle other players on the Internet.

**Sarge Sez** → "American soldiers do not need to be improved! They are absolutely perfect fighting machines! Are you suggesting otherwise, you disloyal little prick? You are officially on latrine duty for the rest of your life!"

# The Heat-O-Meter

## THE TINSELTOWN EDITION

WHAT'S HOT

**MASSIVELY MONOLITH** → Lithtech is going the massively multiplayer route by introducing a new 3D engine specifically for creating persistent online worlds. FOX Interactive has already licensed the engine for an unspecified project, which, hopefully doesn't mean *Party Of Five Million* is around the corner.

**SIMS ON TOP** → *The Sims* blasted past *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire* to take the top spot on the PC Data sales lists in February. A cranky Regis was forced to show designer Will Wright his first check for \$32,000.

**ATI SMELLS FISHY** → ATI Technologies, king of OEM pack-in graphics cards, recently acquired ArtX, creators of the upcoming Nintendo Dolphin graphics chip, for a whopping \$400 million. Gee, fellas, couldn't you have just waited a year and paid \$300 like the rest of us?

WHAT'S COLD

**CAVEDOG PUT DOWN** → *Total Annihilation* developer Cavedog has been shut down by pimp daddy GT Interactive, due to low sales in 1999. Too bad GT doesn't also publish Garth Brooks' albums.

**WHEN BAD LICENSES ATTACK** → Activision and Viacom have announced that a PC game based on the TV show "Entertainment Tonight" will be coming out later this year. Since "ET" has absolutely no elements that could conceivably be turned into a game (unlike that other TV-to-PC smash hit *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire*), rumor has it that the entire game will consist of players guessing how many times Mary Hart can say "Puff Daddy" in one sitting.

**BORING MERGERS** → Advanced Interactive Systems, maker of professional simulation environments for law enforcement, announced their intention to buy Zombie, developers of the *Spec Ops* series. Zombie president Mark Long called the acquisition "exciting." We, however, have yet to find anybody who gives a rat's ass.

**INATION FIGURES** → Toy Vault is set to release a line of *Everquest* action figures. Not so coincidentally, EB is enlarging the size of their bargain bins.

**HASBRO GETS TOUGH** → Claiming copyright infringement, Hasbro has filed suit against a plethora of game companies for making copycat versions of old games like *Pac-Man* (reborn as *MocMon*) and *Asteroids* (back as *HemiRoids*). When it comes to copycating old games, Hasbro doesn't need the competition.



### WHAT THE HELL?

# Gary Coleman Shillin'

## DIFF'RENT STROKES FOR INDIGENT FOLKS

We recently received a postcard from UGODirect.com advertising their voluminous selection of inexpensive "video games, consoles, and accessories." Fair enough. But what really caught our attention was the larger-than-life (but smaller than the rest of us) leering visage of former Arnold Drummond, Mr. "Kid With The Broken Halo" himself. Gary Coleman, reaching out to us, as if to say "Please buy something or I might be forced to

hold up a liquor store." The Colemeister is dubiously quoted as saying, "I buy all my video games at

UGODirect.com," probably because of UGO's peculiarly apt motto, "More Games For Less" ... and of all the Hollywood talents we can think of, Gary's is definitely less. Still, sometimes less is more and while we ridicule Gary, the tiny humanitarian in us reaches out to this tiny human. Who knows, it could be one of us going down the dignity waterslide in the future. See page 102 to get the lowdown on our charitable work.



## WOMEN WE LOVE TO PLAY



So how in the hell did PCXL manage to get a "real" star onto our cover and what the hell does she have to do with *Tribes 2*? Glad you asked. Seems that between *Playboy* photoshoots and saving lives on "Baywatch," Donna went and got married to Nikki Sixx, bass player for Motley Crüe. The music in *Tribes 2* is going to be provided by Motley Crüe. And Donna looked a helluva lot better in spandex than Nikki did.

# Donna D'errico

### OTHER WOMEN YOU'LL NEVER DATE



**WHY YOU CAN'T HAVE HER** → You've never been in a heavy metal band, nor do you have a penis longer than a baby's arm



**WHY YOU CAN'T HAVE HER** → She's dead and it doesn't look like she's gonna get any better



**WHY YOU CAN'T HAVE HER** → She's a he—but, hey, nobody's perfect, right?



**WHY YOU CAN'T HAVE HER** → She married John Stamos — unless you have surely replaced her mind with a sea cucumber

## GameScan

GAMING BOOT CAMP



### KINGDOM UNDER FIRE

**Developer** → Phantagram  
**Publisher** → GOD Games  
**Release Date** → Fall 2000  
**Game Info** → While this game has some similarities to the Warcraft series, the biggest difference is that you alternate RTS missions with Diablo-like adventure levels, gaining new magic spells and armor that can be brought back into RTS combat. The mixing of these two genres is really exciting.  
**Sarge Sez** → "A real soldier must be prepared to fight the enemy face to face. AND to take command of operations. If you are not prepared to send your men into certain death, you will be defeated!"



### SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

**Developer** → Raven Software  
**Publisher** → Activision  
**Release Date** → Spring 2000  
**Game Info** → You can never have too many good first-person splat-fests. You're a merc hired by the U.S. government to track down four rukes stolen by terrorists while handing out generous portions of whup-ass. With 32 weapons, multiple deathmatch options, and "gore zones" on the models, the preview version is already getting plenty of play around here.  
**Sarge Sez** → "Now here is duty worthy of the military personnel of the U.S. of A! A suicide mission against superior forces in possession of a weapon of mass destruction!! It's a pity all we've got are a bunch of worthless pukes like you to accept it!"

# GameScan

GAMING BOOT CAMP



## SIMON THE SORCERER 3D

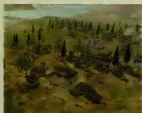
**Developer** → Headfirst Productions

**Publisher** → Southpeak Interactive

**Release Date** → Q1 2000

**Game Info** → Unlike previous incarnations of Simon, this first-person adventure features a 3D environment and characters. Gameplay will be familiar to veterans of the first two, the primary difference being free movement. Incorporating multiple paths and endings, Headfirst has listened to fans of the series who want more replayability.

**Sarge Sez** → "No blood? No slaughter? No large scale massacres? What the hell's the point? Can't send boys to do a man's job."



## BLACK & WHITE

**Developer** → Lionhead Studios

**Publisher** → EA

**Release Date** → Q2 2000

**Game Info** → *Black & White* promises to be one of the best games of the year. In the role of an all-powerful sorcerer (or god), you can destroy or protect the peaceful world of Eden with giant monsters and powerful spells. However, your might depends on the worship of your followers, as does that of your enemies.

**Sarge Sez** → "Looks like another worthless f---kin' UN peacekeeping mission! Bunch of psychotic megalomaniac dictators tryin' to kick the living shit out of each other. Then you gotta bunch of dumb-ass chivies sitting in the middle that are too stupid to get outta the way and WE gotta protect 'em!"



▶ A MOMENT WITH GIA DECARLO

# Get a Sim Life

## TIPS FOR MAKING THE SIM WITH TWO BACKS



The guys have spent an inordinate amount of time playing *The Sims* this month, and since they were ignoring me (something I simply don't tolerate), I decided to give it a try as well. While the guys may be gaming experts, their knowledge of love and social interaction is seriously lacking. That's where I come in. I'm going to give you the best tips for your Sim love life and then demonstrate how they can be applied to your real life. It's proof that some things can be learned from games, kinda.

### Not Lesbian Action

**SIMS** → Surprisingly easy to accomplish and believe it or not, potential lick partners don't all look like Ellen DeGeneres. Call over the potential lover and take her into a separate room from her husband. Now do the following:

Talk, Talk, Joke, Talk, Joke, Compliment, Flirt, Talk, Hug, Entertain, Flirt, Tickle, Hug, Give Back Rub, and Kiss.

**REAL-LIFE** → Since most of you are men, this is pretty near impossible. However, for the ladies of

**PCXL** (and I know who both of you

are!) I've come up with a

strategy. Call over the

potential lover and

encourage her husband to come into the

room with you (there

isn't a guy in the world

who wouldn't love to have

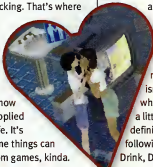
a little three-way — he'll

definitely help). Now do the

following: Talk, Giggle, Touch,

Drink, Drink, Drink, Kiss, Lick,

Bite, Grab toys.



### The Love That Bares Not Speak Its Name

**SIMS** → All Sims seem to be sexually ambivalent (even the married ones), so if your boy toy wants to "hang" with the guys then it isn't

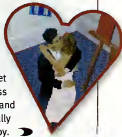
that "hard." Perform the following and you'll be ready for some same-sex lovin': Talk, Talk, Joke, Entertain, Talk, Talk, Entertain, Talk, Hug, Give Back Rub, Talk, Flirt, Kiss.

**REAL-LIFE** → If this is your kinda thing (and there isn't anything wrong with you if it is) then make sure you go to a place full of like-minded guys. While there's a 1-in-10 chance that one of your buddies at the gym might reciprocate. There's a 9-in-10 chance you could get the crap beat out of you.

### Making Babies

**SIMS** → Leave the toilet seat down, kiss and hug a lot and she'll eventually want a baby

**REAL-LIFE** → Leave the toilet seat down, kiss and hug a lot and she'll eventually demand a baby.



## GAME KILLER

# Destroy South Park

## WHAT WOULD BRIAN BOITANO DO?

(Sung to the song "What Would Brian Boitano Do?" from *South Park: Bigger, Longer, and Uncut*)



**MIKE** → What would Brian Boitano do

If *Rally* was here right now?

He'd destroy the disc and give it its due,

That's what Brian Boitano'd do!

**MATT** → When Brian Boitano

drove his Volvo

Dragging the CD-ROM

He jumped two gorges and a

canyon, too

Like the Duke Boys at the prom

**CHUCK** → When Brian Boitano

was in Amsterdam

Fighting off ugly skanks

He just held up *South Park Rally*

And let it join their ranks

**OUR PC** → I want this game out of me ...

It's graphics and control are

quite shitty

**MATT** → And I just want Acclaim

to stop torturing everyone

**MIKE** → For our readers, I'll kick

the game's ass, too

'Cause that's what Brian Boitano

would do!

**CHUCK** → And when Brian Boitano

gets his own game

We'll probably give it a pass

**ALL** → 'Cause a Brian Boitano

skating game would be 100-ty!

So let's get all the

readers together

And unite to stop this slop

And we'll have a Guinness and

Black Star, too

'Cause that's what Brian Boitano

would do!

**... AND GOOD RIDDANCE**

# Goodbye, Rob

## THE GRASS IS ALWAYS GREENER ...

What happens to PCXL editors when they're no longer "down with the kidz," too old to know Limp Bizkit from Limp Bisquick, and too cranky to put up with the "fresh thinking" ways of Mike Salmon? Why, they join *PC Gamer*, of course!

Seeing the early warning signs, the PCXL staff decided that it was "for the best" to put Executive Editor Rob Smith out to pasture. There, he had room to frolic with other used-up industry legends like Johnny Wilson, Gary Whitta, Nolan Bushnell, and John Romero, engaging in exciting cud-chewing contests and reminiscing about

"the good ol' days" of DOS. But, just as quickly, Rob was snatched away by *PC Gamer* (the retirement home for game editors) to become its new Editor-in-Chief. While Rob is in the process of growing a beard and filling out his belly, we're happy to announce the arrival of our new Executive Editor, Jason Samuel, who will be trained to spout British jibberish, sing the praises of *Daikatana*, and take hits off the crackpipe.

But seriously, congratulations Rob—we're proud of you. Now, lay off the *PC Exaggerator* jokes (and the crack) will ya?

"Moo... Jammy Gili!"



### HOW ROB WILL CHANGE PC GAMER

**Gamer's Coconut Monkey to be replaced by Jennifer Love Hewitt**

**Suddenly Rob becomes "the funny one"**

**Drones on with boring industry stories a whopping 78% less than when EIC**

**All flight sim articles will be written while drunk**



**▶ PCXL P.I.**

# What'd you say?!?

## THE DEVIL AND MISS PSYCHIC

Once again, the hard-hitting, always-questioning PCXL P.I. hits the phone lines to get you all the truth you can possibly handle. The mission: Discover the actual release dates of some of the most anticipated games in development. The means: A two-fold path leading to enlightenment. First, we talk to an EB clerk at the local mall. Working in the fast-paced world of consumer fulfillment, these helpful and resourceful wage slaves surely know all the ins and outs of the computer industry. Then, we called

the world-renowned Madame LaChante at 1-900-PSYCHIC to tap into the ether. Here are our transcripts of these absolutely true (we swear) conversations.

### Question 1

**WHEN DO YOU THINK DIABLO II WILL BE RELEASED?**

**EB** → Well, that could come out anytime (gum-popping sound), but you know it's like, been supposed to come out for quite some time. Who knows? I think you can pre-order it online to save \$5 and get the special "Gold" edition.

**PSYCHIC** → Oh Lord! The Devil tain't never gonna be released child, 'cept when Jesus will be back to throw him in da pit of fire.

**PCXL** → (Nervously) Is that anytime soon?

**PSYCHIC** → I jus' don' know child, jus' don' know (sounds sad).

### Question 2

**DAIKATANA, DO YOU REALLY THINK IT WILL EVER COME OUT?**

**EB** → Sheesh, who knows on that one. That one is even worse than *Diablo II* ... "anytime" is what I heard. You ever played *Half-Life*? We've got copies of that ...

**PSYCHIC** → Who's supposed to die? I don't see no one dyin' in your future, but your girlfriend is cheatin' on you. And it's with your best friend!

### Question 3

**YOU EVER HEARD OF AMEN? KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT IT COMING OUT?**

**EB** → I never heard of it — we don't carry a lot of religious games. Might be in the discount box over there. *Requiem* is there ... it was kinda religious.

**PSYCHIC** → 'Course I heard of *Amen*, say it every night when I'm goin' to sleep and when I wake up. Gots to say "amen" if'n you want the lord on your side. Better say yo amens cuz I see trouble with a bald man dat wear lipstick at your work in yo future.

# GameScan

GAMING BOOT CAMP



### GIANTS: CITIZEN KABUTO

**Developer** → Planet Moon Studios

**Publisher** → Interplay

**Release Date** → Fall 2000

**Game Info** → Blowing up alien sheep, enslaving locals, and killing everyone else ... that pretty much describes the action/adventure game *Giants*. You can play the part of a society of naked, magic-wielding women, a group of highly advanced aliens in body armor, or a giant monster with a "mouth cam."

**Sarge Sez** → "Naked women prancing around the countryside and a bunch of freaks in armor whose asses I can kick when I get bored ... God bless America!"



### IRON STRATEGY

**Developer** → Nikita

**Publisher** → TBA

**Release Date** → March 2000

**Game Info** → If you like big tanks, giant robots, and alien dinosaurs, you'll like *Iron Strategy*. As a prospector representing one of several spacefaring races, your job is to claim planets for your government and kick trespassers' asses. Like *Warcraft*, you expand your base and build up your troops. But unlike *Warcraft*, you can design your warbots by mixing and matching parts to your liking.

**Sarge Sez** → "Big deal! Only chicken shit mother f—ers fight from inside tanks! Real men join the infantry where they don't have several inches of steel plate to hide behind, and face their enemies like men should!"



www.pcxl.com  
Rob valiantly tried to stop us from depicting him as a cow → We just tipped him over

# GameScan

GAMING BOOT CAMP



## THE DREAMLAND CHRONICLES: FREEDOM RIDGE

**Developer** → Mythos Software  
**Publisher** → Bethesda Softworks  
**Release Date** → Q4 2000  
**Game Info** → Aliens have all but wiped out Earth's defenders. The few remaining military forces have united, hoping that alien technology they have acquired will allow them to defeat the invaders.

**Sarge Sez** → "Damn aliens make me puke! If those bastards think they can beat the U.S. of A., bring 'em on! I will personally rip their wings off, shove 'em down their throats, and plant my marine corps issue boots up their alien asses!"



## PANTY RAIDER: FROM HERE TO IMMATURITY

**Developer** → Hypnotix, Inc.  
**Publisher** → Simon & Schuster Interactive  
**Release Date** → May 2000  
**Game Info** → You'd think this was a parody of the *Tomb Raider* series, but it's more ... or less. As the press release says: "Panty Raider takes gamers to Model Isle for a super-model photo shoot. The player is on a mission to photograph specific styles and colors of panties to satisfy three testosterone-driven teenage aliens and keep them from blowing up the Earth."

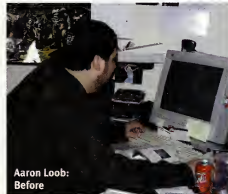
**Sarge Sez** → "Maggots, VD is the scourge of the fightin' man. When you're out in the field ... if you know what I mean ... always keep that rascal wrapped so you're not pissin' fire in the morning."

# How To Survive Anything

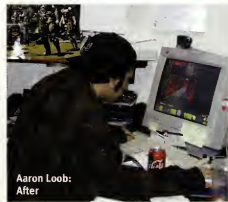
## ... WITHOUT HAVING TO EAT A BRAZILIAN SOCCER TEAM

### Man Survives Four Wretched Weeks of Isolation

In a harrowing tale of man vs. nature, Atlanta resident Aaron Loob, 29, survived four weeks of isolation in his room at his parents' house. Existing on an almost inexhaustible supply of Coca-Cola and paint chips, this job-challenged (read: unemployed) individual left only to use the bathroom, and "certainly wasn't looking for a f---king job" father John Loeb commented. Using skills gained during his Boy Scout days, Aaron was able to cook roaches and ants on his 3D card, play hours of *Quake III*, and whittle soap dolls of Abe Vigoda. As you can see from the before and after pictures, Aaron is going to pull through — barely. Knowing such an event could challenge any PCXL reader at any given time, we've put together a group of survival tips for different situations that might just arise.



Aaron Loob:  
Before



Aaron Loob:  
After



### How to Survive a Shark Attack

Next time a shark bursts into your room while you're playing *Unreal Tournament*, your best defense is a good offense. Hit the shark in the gills or eyes with anything in your possession, such as a keyboard, Abe Vigoda\* soap carvings, or your fists. Apparently sharks are the coyotes of the sea — fight back and they run.



If Abe in drag (Fishnet?) doesn't scare a shark, nothing will.

*"It is a well-known fact that either soopy water or the sight of Abe Vigoda can be an extremely painful experience when introduced to the eye — daubly sa if it's a shark's eye. So if you get ottocked, just imagine whot Abe-On-A-Rape can do.*

### How to Escape from Quicksand

Hazard! The half-drunk Mauntain Dew cans, beers, and ... uhh ... tissues you've left on the floor have now gained a liquified state. One night as you stumble away from your computer you start to sink into this domestic quicksand. The trick here is to act like a cheap whore pulling a train in Tijuana. Do your best to move onto your back with your arms and legs spread out. The faster you try to escape, the more difficult it will be to get out, so try to move as slowly as possible. Then slowly use your arms to propel yourself to your bed or dry ground, if you can stand the shame of behaving like a cheap whore to save yourself. Discount harlot!

Wait, is this porn or bait?

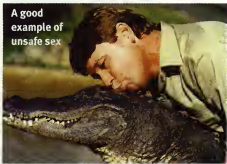


## How to Escape From a Sinking Car

While on your way to the local grocery, porn, and bait store, you think about the latest joke from **PCXL** and laugh uncontrollably, only to swerve off the road into a dike (as opposed to swerving into a dyke ... they don't much care for that).

As soon as you hit the water, roll down your window. If you can't roll it down, break it. Use your foot, The Club™, or anything in the car to break that window. The sooner the pressure between the outside of the car and the inside equalizes, the sooner you can open the door and get the hell out of that sinking deathtrap. If you can't get the door open or break the window, you're going to have to ride it out and wait until the car is completely filled with water and then open the door. Or wait until you're completely filled with water and then ... oh, never mind ...

A good example of unsafe sex



## How to Wrestle an Alligator

Unbeknownst to you, an entire family of gators has begun to inhabit the floor of your room. The biggest predator in the bunch is the wily albino bong water gator. Even though alligator induced deaths are pretty rare in the U.S., we hear most attacks do hap-

pen to unsuspecting gamers in the privacy of their own homes.

If you are on land, try to get on the alligator's back and push down on its neck. If you can, try a bit of peek-a-boo by covering its eyes, this may make them more relaxed. Once again a good offense is a good



OK, which one of these monsters is the bigger threat?

defense, go for the eyes and nose of the alligator and if you win you can fashion some stylish boots and belts. If you lose, then it really doesn't matter what the hell you're wearing, now does it?



## How to Survive a Gunfight (without a gun)

While standing in a long-ass line at the post office, some freak pulls out a glock and goes *Postal* (but with nicer graphics).

Obviously your best method is to increase the distance between you and the gun, because as it turns out most real life gunmen have far worse accuracy than their *Quake* brethren and most of 'em don't have rocket launchers (thankfully). Don't run in a straight line, zigzag back and forth. If the gunman has a rifle, try to get around the closest corner of a building. If you aren't the main target you've got some choices, hang tight and stay down or run for it. Now if the guy is shooting everyone you might as well run, but if he is selectively shooting folks and you aren't on his list, stay down. And unlike video games, hopping up and down is a sure way of showing up in a body bag on the evening news.

## Survival Tips – Gamers Beware!

While games are a perfect simulator to try out your new survival skills, don't count on using knowledge you've gained from games to help you in the real world. Many game behaviors are less than effective in real life.

### ROCKET-JUMPING

In *Quake III* rocket-jumping can send you high into the air to escape enemy fire. In real life, you try that shit and the only thing jumping is going to be the value of your life insurance claim.

### ATTACKING WILD ANIMALS FOR GOLD COINS

It turns out that most wild animals don't have a change purse full of gold. So trying to knife-fight a lion is just plain stupid.

### ASKING QUESTIONS OF EVERYONE YOU MEET

Unlike most RPGs, you aren't carrying a sword or walking around with a party, so asking every stranger you meet endless questions will probably end with an ass-whipping. In real life, people aren't very friendly unless they are high on drugs.

# GameScan

GAMING BOOT CAMP



### CODENAME: EAGLE

Developer → Refraction Games

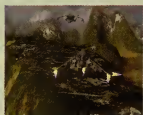
Publisher → Take 2 Interactive

Release Date → Feb. 2000

Game Info → Set between the two world wars, this first-person shooter has you fighting the Russians with a standard variety of weapons. However, you can also hop behind the wheel of a truck or jump on a motorcycle and squish your enemies under your tires.

There are still a number of bugs, but they're being patched since the game is already out in Europe.

Sarge Sez → "Finally! Something to train our boys to kick some commie ass! I'm gonna kill me a commie for my mommy!"



### ECHELON

Developer → Buka Entertainment

Publisher → Bethesda Softworks

Release Date → Q3 2000

Game Info → Formerly titled *Storm*, *Echelon* is one of those

"Hey, you got your *Wing Commander* and *Tribes* in my *MechWarrior*"

game blends combining flight missions with ground battles as you play a member of an elite fighting force facing a revolution on a colonial outpost. Several selectable fighter craft, ranging from plane, helicopter, and futuristic hover-

crafts, round out this action game.

Sarge Sez → "Whether it's by sea, land, or air, you ugly-ass monkey farts are hereby ordered to rain down death and destruction on revolting colonists. Live free or DIE ... as long as you live by my rules!"

# PCXL Charity Drive

## HELPING OUT THE NEEDY ONE GAME AT A TIME

While some might read **PCXL** and think we're a bunch of cold-hearted women chasing bastards, well... they'd usually be right. But having amassed large quantities of ass games over the years, our legendary "Hall Of Ass" overflowing into any available box (known as "Boxes Of Ass"), not even our monthly contests can keep our offices totally *Recoll-free*. Then we realized that we're sitting on a potential fortune — Electronics Boutique and other software stores across the country buy back used games! Now, it wouldn't be ethical for us to profit like this, but how about our fellow man, or fellow bum as the case may be? Well, that's another story...

### Who needs a home? Have a game!

If you've ever been stopped by a scruffy, disheveled man asking for money (who wasn't a politician), then you know the disturbing effect of homelessness on our country — namely, that strident urine smell. Like you, we're hesitant to give money, because it might go to buy liquor, crack, or a "Why Lie? I need beer!" sign. Give the guy a copy of *Y&K: The Game* instead, and sleep easier knowing that it's really hard to make a crackpipe out of a CD-ROM.



Ok, who farted?

always asking for money, especially big churches — the ones so big that they don't even have a church, but a TV network. So, the next time you see a donation plate or a lady with blue hair pleads for a "love pledge," give the old bag a copy of *Deer Hunt Challenge*.

#### SAMPLE CONVERSATION:

**PLEDGE BANK** → Hello, are you calling with an offering of hope?

**YOU** → Absolutely! But I should add that it's more of an "offering of *Deer Hunt Challenge*."

**PLEDGE BANK** → Huh?

**YOU** → No need to thank me. It's my duty as a white, heterosexual Christian soldier, ma'am ...

### Glock The Vote

With presidential elections getting closer, candidates are begging for more cash to get elected than they'll earn in all four years as president. As our current Commander In Cheeks ... err ... Chief put it, we feel their pain. But **PCXL** is part of a huge conglomerate and we have to contribute "soft money" to make everything seem all nice and legal-like. Luckily, there's nothing softer than the fleshy mounds in *Tomb Raider: The Lost Revelation*.



#### SAMPLE CONVERSATION:

**GEORGE W. (LAST NAME WITHHELD TO PROTECT ANONYMITY)**

→ Ah'm sooooo honored that you'd consider contributin' to mah little campaign.

**YOU** → Thanks. That's why I'm sending you a copy of *Tomb Raider: The Lost Revelation*. Oh, and a copy of *X-Games Pro Boorder* ... I know how you enjoy the powder.

**GEORGE W.** → Uhh ... Daddy?

### A Package for Gary

As you read on p. 96, Gary Coleman needs our help. He's been screwed out of millions by his parents, living as a washed-up actor, barely living as a washed-up security guard, and now, pimping himself out on the Internet. Hasn't Gary Coleman given enough?

To reward the years of pleasure that Gary's given us, we sent him an "offering of hope." Each and every copy of *Spotterball*, *Pondoro's Box*, and *Storftlee Academy Exponision Pock: Chekhov's Lost Missions* was lovingly hand-selected by our staff for Gary's enjoyment and sent to Gary in care of UGODirect. As for us, there's no need for thanks — it's the little things that mean the most. ▶



Did you ever wonder what would happen if the editors of **PCXL** had a chance to work at a woman's magazine? Well, wonder no longer. Simply take these next two pages, cut them out, and slyly insert them in your wife/girlfriend/sister/mom's (nevermind the mom thing, that's gross) copy of *Cosmo*. Now sit back and reap the rewards that only a **PCXL** reader deserves. Take pictures of anything related to this fiasco and we'll hook you up with a free subscription (to **PCXL**, not *Cosmo*, you little sissy).

#### THIS MONTH →

*Cosmopolitan*

**DESIRED EFFECT** → To sabotage *Cosmo* with advice that'll make our lives easier

**POSSIBLE SIDE-EFFECTS** → Mindless drones that actually read *Cosmo* will believe our advice ... wait, that'd be good. Never mind.



#### SAMPLE CONVERSATION:

**HOB0** → Hey, buddy, can you help me out with a dollar?

**YOU** → No, but here, have this copy of *Y&K: The Game*.

**HOB0** → I want money, you damned [unintelligible]!

**YOU** → This is better! Just take it to Electronics Boutique and trade it in for cash.

**HOB0** → [pees on self]

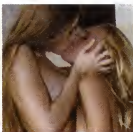
### Help The Church — PCXL-style

Apparently, churches do all sorts of things for the needy, like feeding the hungry and ministering to young naked boys ... you know, charitable stuff. That's why they're



## Male Mind Reading

We asked 100 guys what they'd think if they caught their girlfriend orally pleasuring their sister.



**19%**

said my girlfriend and my sister are pretty much the same person (all of these men were from the "Deep South")

**35%**

said whatever floats her boat, man, as long as I don't have to touch my sister —she has cooties

**46%**

said "eww" and got really uncomfortable

### his dating behavior decoded



## Double Standards: Why they're so cool

Unless you have a history of being irrationally jealous (like all women), chances are your suspicions are well-founded, and your man is probably boinking every girl who looks at him. But what's so wrong with that? According to Dr. Weiskopffernuegun (author of *There's Nothing Wrong With Being His Bitch*), "It is quite normal and healthy for men to lust after every woman they meet. If you place restrictions like monogamy on your man, then he will just eventually resent you." However this doesn't mean you can go around and have sex with every man you meet — that is just wrong. There are also great advantages to a philandering mate. He rarely demands sex and he feels extreme guilt. Take advantage of his guilt to land expensive jewelry without having to put out — the best of both worlds.



Check out the I-think-you're-sexy subtleties that a man just can't hide.

#### Crush Clue 1

"Check out his lips — is he pressing them against yours excessively?" asks Martin Lloyd-Clueless, author of *Not So Secret Secrets of Sexual Body Language* (Useless Press, 1996). When aroused, a man's kisser becomes sensitive and he usually attempts to stick his tongue down your throat.

#### Crush Clue 2

Does he constantly make comments like, "You wanna do it" or "Nice rack baby"? According to exhaustive research done by Lloyd-Clueless, comments like this indicate a guy is interested in you for more than your stunning conversational skills.

#### Crush Clue 3

Zoom in on his package. Is it bulging? If a man spots eye-pleasing prey, his animal instincts kick in and he gets "wood." The better to stick you with, my dear.

#### Crush Clue 4

You're in a bar, it's closing time and you are the only girl in a 40-foot radius. According to Dr. Wylie (author of *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Idiots*), "At this time every man in that bar wants you, no matter how disgustingly fat and ugly you may be." So pick your mate and ... uhh ... mate.

#### Crush Clue 5

Has he ever bought you anything? A drink, a salad ... it doesn't really matter. Wylie states, "Men have a close association between their wallets and their penises, and they wouldn't spend a dime on you unless they thought it gave them a better chance at getting laid."

**"Men have a close association between their wallets and their penises."**

— *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Idiots*

## why don't you...



### ...look like this?

Face facts: If you don't look like this, then you are ugly.

### ...grab him a beer!

Why? Why the hell not? He's thirsty and the lovely collection of hops and barley is just what he wants. For variation on this winning tip, you can also bring him several beers, bring him beers in the buff, and make him some food to go with the beer. Get to it.



### ...wake him up with a hummer

Not only will it make your man happy, which is always important, but scientists have also proven that a man's ... uhh ... man milk makes for a tasty, low-calorie, fat-burning, life-enriching treat. New studies have shown that frequent felatio actually reduces your chance of cancer, gets rid of unwanted cellulite, eliminates the need for periods, and lessens cravings for chocolate. Isn't it time you started going down?



After



### ...shut the hell up!

Silence is golden and no, he doesn't want to hear about your day at work (unless, of course, it involves hot woman-on-woman sex), your problems, or any of that other trivial shit. Shut it already!

What men hear:  
"Blah, blah, blah"



### ...realize that bigger is better

That skinny no-boob Kate Moss look is so five minutes ago. Sporting anything smaller than a 44 DD bra size is an insult to the women who pioneered much-needed breast augmentation research. Besides, guys love big ta-tas ... and maybe you will too if given half a chance.

# FEEDBACK

letters@pcxl.com

→ Another month and yet another batch of insane rants, wrongful claims, misguided souls, and as many pictures of hot girls as we could possibly fit onto two pages. These are YOUR pages, so if you don't like 'em then it's your own damn fault. Send all your amusing tales and stories of worship to [letters@pcxl.com](mailto:letters@pcxl.com).

## INCITING WAR

All right, SCREW the PC Gamer vs. PC Accelerator debate, THEY are not the enemy. Let me tell you the true foe. Have you SEEN *Incite* "gaming magazine"? From the commercials, it's clear they WISH they were you — VERY, VERY, badly. So, I clicked one of those Internet ads, and got a free issue. After page after page of bland reviews, horrible layouts, colorless humor, and just overall stupidity not seen since ... well, ever (seriously, they make PC Games look great), I came upon the cover feature "Ten Ways to Get the Girl." In it were such gems as "Don't Collect Dolls," "Do Some Sit-ups and Lay Off the Chips." Brilliant. I'm sooooo glad they revealed this deep, dark secret, NOW I know how to catch that elusive supermodel! And then there was #3: "Hide Your Joystick." NOW you're just getting insulting. If a woman will dump you the moment she learns you even PLAY games, I'm screwed. And the #1, tip? Get this: SHUT DOWN ALL THOSE FREE E-MAIL ACCOUNTS." Gia, have you EVER dumped a guy because he used Hotmail? Who gives a crap? I've had more women problems than I wish to admit, but I've never heard "I'm sorry, Matt, you use Hotmail — it's over. I'm strictly an ISP-provided woman." Thanks anyway, I think I'll stick with PCXL. Even if it DID show me that I am terminally in "The Friend Zone." "She watches Adam Sandler movies with you." (Uh-oh.) "She lets you see her without her hair done." (Ugh.) "Her parents like you" (I'm screwed.)

Matthew Young

Well Matt, we aren't ones to slag on our "supposed" competition,

so commenting on the overall crapness of *Incite*, the sleep-inducing CGW, the phenomenally average *Computer Games*, or even our friends over at PC Lamer is beneath us. However if our readers want to help out humanity by ridding the world of these cancerous publications, then we'd suggest burying them behind *Martha Stewart's Living* at every newsstand, and telling everyone you know what a horrible waste of money these mags are and that reading them is likely to induce horrible disease. Of course, we aren't inciting you to do this — that would be beneath us.

## PCXL IS "THE SHIT"

When I first got your mag it was an accident. I signed up for a one-mag trial. I skimmed it and it didn't seem that great. So at the time I thought the only thing this mag was good for was when I took a shit and I needed to wipe my ass. Then another mag came and I said, "Damn it! I have to pay for the whole year for this toilet paper!" (Which I must say was very uncomfortable when applied to the ass.) So I sent in a check with my life savings on it to your money-gobbling company and in came the glossy toilet paper.

At first I did the same with the first couple as I did with the supposed trial issue — skimmed through looking for reviews that might interest me. I then got sucked into some of them, they made me chuckle a little. Then I wandered into the X-tra section, where I found myself liking it so much I went through the garbage to pick feces off the old copies. Well, I guess the mag turned out for the better.

G-impka

Due to the craptacular possibilities of a witty retort, we've decided to let the readers choose their own response ...

- No shit!
- We're sorry you had to go through so much crap to enjoy PCXL, but glad to hear you got it "in the end"
- At least you have to apply the shit to PCXL — our competition already comes with the shit pre-packaged and printed on each and every page
- The moral of this story: Once you get through the shit, PCXL is a damn fine magazine
- Four out of five asses agree that PCXL is the shit!

## NATURE VS. NURTURE

There has been a debate in my physics class, after bringing in the March 2000 issue. The stunning woman on the front cover caught the eyes of many in my class, and after a few days (and much eyestrain) a question came to most of our minds, "Are they real or fake?" There have been a great many comments flying in both directions but we need to settle this ongoing dilemma, Thanks ;)

Matt N.

The great debate: Real or Fake? Who really cares?



Matt, seeing as you are all students of physics, this should be a pretty simple solution. Remember Newton and his crazy laws of gravity? Well, apply them to this case and come up with your own hypothesis. Good Luck!

## ITS ROMERO'S FAULT

I have never written to a magazine before but when I saw a glaring mistake in your latest mag I had to respond. On page 32 you write about "etched relief" work in the "frieze" of a certain building within *Doi Kotono*. Well ... you blew it. This area is called a pediment, as a whole, and the triangular area of the pediment is called a Tympanum. I'll make a deal with you ... you stick to teaching people about computer games ... and I'll stick with teaching people classical architecture ... Otherwise, great mag! ... (Oh, and speaking of architecture ... the gals are great too!)

Brian Ewing  
Master Plaster Artisan

letters@pcxl.com

## FEEDBACK



Since that article was written by John Romero and Stevie Case, PCXL has decided to shift blame for this mistake to John Romero (Stevie is too cute to blame for anything). Of course we knew what a pediment was — it's not like we're stupid. We contacted Romero for an official description of this error and he promised he'd have it out by this Christmas — but don't hold your breath.

## TOILET HUMOR

The picture of Tiffany on "Women We Love To Play" (Feb. 2000) was awesome. I was reading your magazine while I was taking a math final and I started laughing so hard the teacher kicked me out and took the magazine away. The only way he will give it back is if I get him a subscription. Screw him, I'll buy another copy! Keep up the babe quotient and add more *Quake* marine comics.

Dick Toilet  
(don't make fun of my name)

Thanks Dick ... uhh, I mean Mr. Toilet ... uh, Crapper ... How the hell can we NOT make fun of your name? Your parents, Mr. and Mrs. Toilet we presume, made that task impossible. Slap them the next time you get a chance — they really deserve it!

## BLOODY OFFENDED!

Being a first time reader of your magazine (made it from pictures to words at last!), and noting the numerous complaints, I feel I should join in ... I am upset and offended at the excessive use of words, sentences, and even paragraphs in your magazine. These take up valuable, educational, often moving photographic space, essential for a quality periodical of your class! As a prime example, I was horrified by the photo of Gia's bottom. Take a look at the size and you must agree, this is unbearable (size of the picture, not her ass). It can hardly be seen, and took several attempts to enlarge it on our copy machine.

Dave Williams  
Hooked & Booked in London

Dave, why would you take a perfectly good ass and try to enlarge it? What the hell kinda goofballs are they serving in Jolly Olde England these days?

## VIRGIN NO MORE!

This past weekend I picked up a copy of your magazine for the first time. WOW!!! I wish I had been picking up copies the whole time you have been around. I am not used to having a magazine with all my interests in it — computers and great looking women. The women are all knockouts. Oh, and the articles are full of exciting information and knowledge (had to commend the gang for the great reviews). And yes, I do read the articles.

Thanks, xjarhead  
Glad you like the mag and it's great to see you have so many varied interests. You're a regular Renaissance man! Now do us a

favor and spread the word to other sad souls who haven't yet tasted the many and resplendent carnal pleasures of PCXL.

## BATTLE OF THE AGES

In your First Person section you have several Ageist comments about "children" and their gaming habits. You think that all "children" that play games are the same and are into games just to "glock glock." I think that voice chat is a great thing — it just shouldn't be used in games like *Quake* where you just run around killing. What is there to say during the game other than "You suck, eat my rocket"? Voice chat is great, just use it for the right games with the right people. And I believe it's "Children should be seen and not heard." not "Children are better off seen and not heard." Ageist!

Gard "Edible Enigma" Wrath

Thanks, Gard ... you couldn't have proven our point better if we'd paid you.

## UNEMPLOYED MINORS WANTED!

My son received two of your magazines today — one to Chris Keller and one to Chris Dragon — since he is under age and has no means of income I guess you don't feel checking these things out in advance is important. On a personal note I found your cover of the women with her breasts falling out somewhat unconnected to a game magazine — I assume this is how you attract young men to the magazine? My hope, therefore, is that more unemployed minors request your publication and can't pay for it.

You've figured out our top-secret circulation strategy. By the way, your sons Chris and Chris have been sent to our collection agency (Deadbeats Are Deadmeat). We're not saying that you "have" to pay the bill, but Tony "Kneecaps" has amazing powers of influence — if you know what we mean.

## TRUE PCXL HEROES!

This letter is a story of how I managed to up the sales of your crumulent mag. I noticed that *Barely Legal* was selling better than your magazine. However I noticed that most of these young fellows ever so cleverly slipped *Barely Legal* between the pages of some other less offensive mag like *Yankee Crafts*. So I placed all the PCXL's next to the porn mags, so they grabbed PCXL to hold their porn in. The beauty of the whole thing is that when the time comes for them to leave, they dejectedly put down their skin-mag of choice and as they reach to return PCXL they notice, "Hey! More scantily clad women, not to mention screenshots of *Daikatana!* Awesome! I'll buy this!" they say. Then the excited youngster will cheerily exit the store, clutching his new purchase to his chest.

A Reader



That's funny — a lot of people tend to think that the stuff we slip in between our hallowed pages is "barely legal" anyway.

## YET ANOTHER PERV

I recently got your March issue, and I decided to take it to school for a little "quality" reading time. Now I am known as the school perv, and had at least three different teachers take it away from me. I think you guys are doing an excellent job. Keep up the good work.

Voodoo Master

PS: I actually had people offer me money for one of your subscription cards. (Yes I took it.)

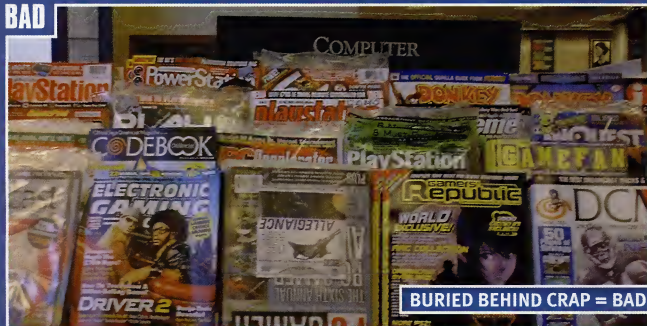
Don't worry, Mr. Master, each person on our staff was known as "the school perv" in their respective schools, and look how well we've done for ourselves ... umm, kinda.



Come on now, the guy's name is "Dick Toilet" for Christ's sake!

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This is what happens when you let an editor lay out a page - piss poor art courtesy of Mike Salmon

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What the hell does Chaucer have to do with recording and mixing your own music?

Why are you learning 'Ritual Burial Customs from Kuala Lumpur to Turkmenistan' when all you think about is building a bad-ass 3D battle cruiser?

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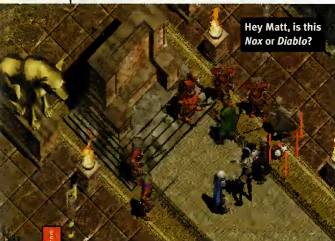




## FIRST PERSON

### Diablo-clone my ass!

**E**very time I hear someone complain about *Nox* or *Revenant* being just another *Diablo* knockoff, I get pissed off. It's a disservice to the developers and the players of said "clone" games that often times, good games are relegated to the clone pile without getting a chance to strut their stuff. *Diablo* was fun, but it had a lot of weak spots and was certainly not the end-all/be-all of isometric adventures. I don't know many people in this crackfired industry who played past the first couple



of levels of *Revenant* or *Nox*, yet felt confident in shouting that they offered nothing new.

Moreover, to devalue a game simply because it is not some other more popular game is simply poor reviewing. *Revenant* had an interesting storyline as well as a unique combat system that not only added depth and style to the frequent battles, but was also a lot of fun. It was not the developers' fault that some chose to play their game as if it was the click-fest that was *Di-*

*ablo*. *Nox* has the most innovative multiplayer action I've seen in years, yet it's ignored because "It's just *Diablo*, except you can't co-op."

The same mouths that whine and complain that there is no innovation in games are deriding, or worse, ignoring, games that try to do something different. Is there a problem with actually playing a game at least halfway through and then deciding whether or not it is good? How many people would have thought *Half-Life* sucked ass if it had started with the Xen levels — would they ever have bothered to play past the first two?

It doesn't help that the foundations of these judgments are frequently unfairly biased. It's true that as an editor in this industry, not only is time limited, but you see so many games that the ones you concentrate on are usually the ones that have the most flash in the first five minutes (or have a name you recognize). If you are a big *Diablo*/*Command & Conquer*/*Quake* fan, you're going to look at derivative games with less enthusiasm than seagulls.

*Thief* could have easily been ignored as just another first-person shooter, and in fact, was partially designed with more action scenes just to cater to FPS fans, but thankfully it was given enough of a chance to be taken on its own merits. No one said, "*Thief* is just a slow, wannabe *Quake*!" Consequently the sequel will feature even less action-shooter sequences because fans didn't like it as much as the snooping around elements. Score one for innovation!

— MATT "LIKE DIABLO, BUT NOT AS DEEP" HOLMES

## SECOND PERSON

You aren't honestly going to sit there on a soap box and fight for the rights of the poor, misunderstood clones of the world? Even your ignorance must know some bounds! How can you possibly say that it isn't "fair" to compare *Revenant* to *Diablo*? In fact, if you weren't such an ignorant slut then you would have remembered the numerous press releases from Eidos which said things like, "It's just like *Diablo*, except..." Now you say we're being unfair to the game makers by comparing them to the very game they wanted to be compared to?

It is a reviewer's job to rate games based on other games that are out. Every game must be compared to one another. After all, isn't that the very decision our readers will face when they go to buy a game?

Despite your tree-hugging "all games are good" pleas, there is no denying that the easiest way to describe *Nox* or *Revenant* is to say, "It's like *Diablo*, but..." Speaking of butts, have I mentioned that you are an ass?

— MIKE "CLONE THIS, BITCH!" SALMON

## NEXT MONTH?

### THE PERFECT 10

What more could you suckers ask for? The 10 hottest games and 10 hotter girls — our swimsuit spectacular and we've got the games and girls to make it just that frickin' spectacular. *Max Payne*, *NFS: Motor City*, *C&C Renegade*, *Halo*, *Wolfenstein*, and five others you'll crap your pants over.



### IT'LL KILL YA — HONEST

A feature so funny we can't tell you about it now for fear you'll raid our offices and torture us to finish it. Unless you've all become supermodels we wouldn't like that. (P.S. All supermodels are welcome in the PCXL offices for tutoring, spankings, etc.)

### A BLUFFER'S GUIDE TO BUSTING A NUT

We force Matt to play *Soldier of Fortune* 'til he can blow the kneecaps off a sauzbag at 50 yards. Learn from his infinite, and desensitized, wisdom.

### SNOW ANGELS IN HELL 2: THIS TIME WE MEAN IT

It's possible that next month will include the elusive *Daikatana* review. Of course it's also possible that a team of supermodels will raid our offices and make us their personal love slaves.



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- 14.1" SXGA+ Active Matrix Display
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- 2X AGP 8MB ATI RAGE Mobility™-P 3D Video
- 3D Positional Sound with Wavetable
- 52Whr Lithium Ion Battery
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- PC Speakers
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- SoundBlaster 64V PCI Sound Card
- PC Speakers
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- Epson Stylus Color 740, add \$149

#### Scanners:

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#### Software:

- Family Fun 5-Pack, featuring Roll Coaster Tycoon,™ add \$99

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